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Preface

We are pleased to publish the *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Linguistics and Language Studies* (ICLLS 2015). The Conference aims to promote studies in language and linguistics and relevant academic exchange. It serves as an international forum for researchers, scholars, educators, practitioners, postgraduate students and experts in relevant fields to exchange ideas, research results and good practices.

This conference marks the first of a new series of annual conferences, as a joint event of the organiser, the Chartered Institute of Linguists Hong Kong Society, and two co-organisers, Caritas Institute of Higher Education, and the Department of English Language and Literature of Hong Kong Shue Yan University.

ICLLS 2015 addresses a diversity of key issues in linguistics and language studies. Papers cover the following areas:

- Language Assessment
- Language and Culture
- Language Philosophy
- Chinese Philosophy and Language
- Second Language Acquisition
- Bible Translation
- Chinese Linguistics
- Language Learning Resources
- Language Pedagogy
- Language Aesthetics
- Bilingual Studies
- Translation Studies
- Linguistics Analysis

We would like to thank all authors for their contributions. We are also grateful to members of the Programme Committee of ICLLS 2015 for their diligent work in reviewing the many submissions.

Editors

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The Chinese Compound-Nouns Embodied in the *Yin-Yang* Assemblage: With Reference to Deleuze’s Transcendental Empiricism and Systems Theory

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Abstract. Ramifications of the Chinese *yin-yang* 陰陽 assemblage reach far beyond its original scopes of reference in the ancient *yijing* 《易經》. On top of its purviews over epistemology, ontology, aesthetics and social orders, the *yin-yang* emblem also takes into account matters such as bodies, sexes, cultural qualities and territories of all kinds. This paper argues that the *yin-yang* can be pertinent to an analysis of a unique linguistic form of Chinese expression known as “compound noun-phrases” *fu-he-ci* 複合詞. By drawing upon Deleuze’s philosophy of transcendental empiricism and his theory of assemblage thereof, and with particular reference to Daoism after *yijing*, I hope to delineate a semiotic structure out of these phrases with *yin* and *yang* as its reciprocal and coupling components. Such a structure is characterized by a mutually transformative energy, both in style and content, a back-and-forth dynamic between the structural *yang* of condition and the conjugating *yin* of processual flow of matters.

Such a materialization of linguistic enunciation emanating from a vital flow of force embedded in the *yin-yang* assemblage can be found first in the notion of *shi* 勢 as in *ti-shi* 體勢, *chi-shi* 氣勢. From there we will entrain ourselves to this solid/fluid structure in expressions such as *ti-hui* 體會, *ti-ren* 體認 and *ti-xian* 體現, in order to highlight the “bodily” intensity so characteristic in compounds of this kind. We will next proceed to *quan-xi* 關係 and *jing-yan* 經驗, as they are finally summated under the exemplary morphology of the term *wen-hua* 文化 itself. The conceptual outcomes of our analysis of these “collective assemblages of enunciation” (Deleuze & Quattari, *ATP*, 504) will be such that first, these expressions materialize a self-propelled dynamic between the transcendental solidity, and the empirical and immanent flux of porous “events” which obey the rule of opening from closure in systems theory. Second, as a single linguistic entity, each of them generates a kind of *ti-shi*, embracing both conditioning and the conditioned inherent in the *yin-yang* assemblage. In other words, these expressions form assemblages made up of both semiotic articulation and semantic entities which do not forsake the concretes (as with Deleuze’s superior empiricism) of the world. Such a linguistic performance can then be attributed to the Daoist valorizing the vibratory *yin* power of propensity, in sharp contrast with the *yang* fixity of all things we find in the Confucian ethics.

As the grid network of intersecting *yin-yang* forces borne out of the processuality of *dao* is firmly grafted not onto a platform of One and the Many, but one *with* the many, it is Deleuze and Guattari who affirm that *yin-yang* functions as “a sort of to-ing and fro-ing,” which “inscribes the diagrammatic movement of a Nature-thought on the plane, *yin* and *yang*.” (*WP*, 91) Here we understand the original logic of *yin-yang* as non-hierarchical and intersecting ordinals leading to coordinates of things, making up a pulverizing machine into which distributed elements are fed and out of which patterns of things emerge. But what makes *yin-yang* a genuine assemblage in the Deleuzian context? How does it, together with many of its subsequent ramifications, relate to Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism in general? We should note first, that the *yin-yang* emblem embodies the synchronic and the diachronic, both the condition and its successive modulations of *qi* in processes of emergence. Then “assemblages (*Agencements*),” according to Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*,

are defined simultaneously by *matters of expression* that take on consistency independently of the form-substance relation; reverse causalities or “advanced” determinations, decoded innate functions related to *acts of discernment* or election rather than to linked reactions; and *molecular combinations* that proceed by noncovalent bonding rather than by linear relations – in short, a new “pace” produced by the imbrication of the *semiotic* and the *material* Just as milieus swing between a stratum state and a movement of destratification, assemblages swing between a territorial closure that tends to reterritory them and a deterritorializing movement that on the contrary connects them with the Cosmos. (336-7)

Our next question is: what is the very specific content of this vital and pulsing force that makes up a *yin-yang* assemblage? How can we be more concrete in our description of the spreading of the *yang chi* together with the life-producing *yin* energies within an assemblage of Deleuze’s disiring machine? Here I would like to highlight what Jane Bennett has achieved in her choice of the Chinese notion of *Shi* 勢 to explain what an assemblage is. By granting the affective bodies a kind of “vital materiality” which generates agency power, Bennett turns to *shi* – through the sinologist Francois Jullien’s *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China* – as “the very disposition of things” whose “assemblage is vibratory.” What goes on in the process of emergence of an assemblage can be attributed to this *shi* which is “the style, energy, propensity, trajectory, of élan inherent to a specific arrangement of things ... *shi* names the dynamic force emanating from a spatio-temporal configuration rather than from any particular element within it.” (Bennett, 35)

The character *shi* by itself can mean tendency, propensity and a kind of incorporeal moving structure. *Shi* is considered the generator of “fluxes of matter or energy” as natural “tendencies” driving complex capacities under the process of affordance in such a way species of life “exhibit a variety of capabilities to form *assemblages* with other individuals, organic or inorganic.” (DeLanda: 61-63) Now it becomes clear for us that together with *shi* 時 (time) as *shi-shi* 時勢, *chi* 氣 as *chi-shi* 氣勢 or with *ti* 體 as *ti-shi* 體勢, the compounds point to something very similar to Bennett’s vital materiality, or rather materialistic vitality, always at a point of catching the wave of life’s intensities.

They form assemblages of enunciation (*ATP*, 504); and as linguistic and semantic entities, their mutually transformative power is such that the two parts, one close to functioning as partly metaphoric and the other partly metonymic, one being a noun and the other usually a verb or gerund “conjugating matter and function,” one with relatively fixed identity, the other shifting the base of identity so as to make it contiguous¹. All these compounds share a unique combination of condition and process, concrete state of things and their differential speeds, solidity and movement, all to be subsumed under the *yin-yang* assemblages. Here the curvature as stipulated by the *yin-yang* diagram undergoes the folding and infolding of virtual multiplicities, as expounded by Zhuangzi’s ideas of *wei-she* 委蛇 (snake-curving), *wei-he* 委和 (crooked mix) and *wei xing* 委形 (non-linear form), and these zig-zagging and transversal flights with directional *ti-shi* become biological processes not unlike DeLanda’s “sinusoidal oscillations.” (87)

Having introduced the *yin-yang* as a Deleuzian assemblage, and having further elaborated on J. Bennett’s designating the *shi* energies as some kind of vibrant matter in it, I now move on to establish the interconnectedness between a number of Chinese expressions, which, I would argue, are entrained first with the *yin-yang* assemblage one way or another, and second Deleuze’s major philosophical concept, namely his transcendental empiricism. It is my claim that these expressions are formed through an implicit mix of the *yin-yang* energy flow, but, with their habitual uses sedimented over centuries of practice, have been subject to the inertia of common sense and hence tended to have lost their concretes with the synthesis of time. This is why we emphasize the need of our creating new concepts around and beyond the *yin-yang* cosmology, and this is done by way of returning to their dynamic assemblages which resonate with Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism. I will endeavor to show, first, that these compound articulations exhibit a kind of dynamics at once projecting and reciprocating, and second, they semantically connote an openness to systems of many creative assemblages. This again fits well into Deleuze’s notion of assemblage considered as “a concept dealing with the play of contingency and structure, organization and change,” emphasizing the side of “the process of arranging, organizing, fitting together” instead of “arrangement or organization.” (J. Macgregor Wise, 77)

Hence, expressions I draw upon are literally “collective assemblages of enunciation,” (*ATP*, 504) serving as illustrations of Deleuze’s idea of what transpires between body and sense, the very combinations of a stop-and-flow intersection where “Linguistically, bodies are associated with nouns, while events are verb, in particular infinitive forms of verbs.” (Poxon and Stivale, 67) As to my understanding of the term transcendental

¹ The pairing of these concepts comes close, of course, to Roman Jakobson’s “Two Aspects of Language.” Such pairing is also similar to what Maurizio Lazzarato talks about on Guattari’s ethico-aesthetic paradigm shift, in that “the emphasis from what is said to the act of speaking, from the *énoncé* to the *énonciation*, leading us to consider the latter as ‘polyphony’ in the twofold sense of the assemblage of a multiplicity of voices (social and pre-individual), but also of an assemblage of a multiplicity of semiotics (verbal, affective, mechanical etc.). In emphasizing the process of the constitution of the individual and collective subject, Guattari dispenses with the primacy of the signifiers (the primacy of the statement and notably of the political statement which makes the declarations and which represents), instead developing an asignifying, non-verbal and affective semiotics.” (Lazzarato, 176-177)

empiricism, there are a number of fundamental concepts I will hold on to: First, in *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Deleuze asks “how can a subject transcending the given be constituted in the given?” (*ES*, 86) Second, the concept that the sensible, or say, physical energy can be pushed to the extreme so as to reach out towards a transcendental principle. (*WP*, 26; *DR*, 240-41; 310-11) Third, the famous idea that “Relations are external to their terms,” which “means that ideas do not account for the nature of the operations that we perform on them, and especially of the relations that we establish among them.” (*ES*, 101) Fourth, Deleuze keeps warning us “not to lose the concrete”! (Martin, viii) Fifth, Deleuze points out that even though Kant was right to think it necessary to create conditions for experience, his mistake was to have “traced the transcendental from the empirical” by positing a conscious subject-object relation. (*DR*, 142; *LS*, 97) Sixth and finally, Deleuze’s radical or superior empiricism, the very nature of the concept transcendental empiricism itself, can be summed up by the idea that “conditions no broader than the conditioned.” (*NP*, 91; B, 27; 30)

We may follow up on the compounds we put forward concerning the cosmic force of *shi* 勢, such as *chi-shi* 氣勢 (the vital breath trajectory), *qu-shi* 趨勢 (natural tendency) and *ti-shi* 體勢 (body or matter moving structure), and then move on to a series of noun-phrases with an emphasis on the body that matters. This series always begins with the character *ti* 體 (body), to be followed by, and working in tandem with, many other terms which function as circumventing the *ti* into circles of self-reference and cross-reference with other series. The body here amounts to the “nomadic body-machine” Braidotti puts forward as that which becomes “an embodied, affective and intelligent entity that captures processes and transforms energies and forces;” (2011, 101) and what follows this *ti* would be creative repeating, gathering and thinking through both actual and virtual complexities and interconnections. My first example is *ti-xian* 體現 (bodily emergent, appearing, bringing to surface). One good way of describing it would be by Edgar Landgraf’s notion of “improvisation as a Form-Event” where, especially in performing art, “The simultaneous conception and presentation of art appears to be able to captivate an audience and create an ‘experience of presence’ (Gumbrecht), independent of any meaning” (Landgraf: 190) Then we have *ti-hui* 體會 (bodily gathering of events), *ti-ren* 體認 (bodily recognition and understanding), *ti-nian* 體念 (bodily Idea from the heart), and also *ti-yan* 體驗 (bodily reflection through concept). All these compounds share a common feature of transversally connecting the body with some “incorporeal predicates or event,” (*LS* 4-5; Bowden, 23) focussing at all times on the body in relation to thinking, or creating ideas by resingularizing events. Whatever goes on in the mind is embedded in the body which harbors complex physical states, and such primacy granted to embodiment is the only way to make “sense” of the world. Here the Deleuzian sense is that which emerges as pure event, *bodying* forth difference-in-itself, the events always “subsist” in the relations between bodies. (*LS*, 4-7)

The complex dynamics of intermediation performed by this series starting with *ti* “is not carried out by the mind, but occurs in the mind.” (*DR*, 71) To enact our capacity of *ti-hui*, *ti-nian* and *ti-ren*, we reject good sense and common sense out of a knowing subject. Ever mindful of the importance of participation over recognition, we denounce any disembodied Ideas in the name of rational thought. The character *xian* in particular denotes a sense which “surface(s) along which proposition comes into

contact which it denotes, manifests and signifies a surface that likewise, brings together the realm of actual bodies and virtual Ideas.” (Poxon & Stivale, 68) The character *ren*, in turn, manifests not recognition, not domesticated difference, rather it makes sure that we do not miss the encounter with haecceities, the empirical thisnesses of events in an aleatory world. It is as if there is a melee of foggy events, and suddenly you see its connection. As *ti-ren* is executed in time, it can be related to an act of “contraction” which “forms a synthesis of time.” (DR 71) and as J. Williams explains, “we do not require a mind as such but a process connecting repeated things. This process is contraction.” (2011, 24) With *nian*, Ideas appear or shine forth from the heart without resemblance, identity or analogy. As *thought eventing the concept, ti-nian* 體念 *instantiates assemblages*, avoiding the trap of taming difference into the pitfalls of representation. If we were to grant the Chinese culture (*wen-hua*) a status of transcendental horizon, it can only become something which exists precisely in an embodiment of thinking. I would argue, therefore, this primacy of bodily thinking is exactly the kind of “nomadic” thinking R. Braidotti has in mind, the thinking which “stresses the idea of embodiment and the embodied and embedded material structure of what we commonly call thinking.” As such, the nomadic theory is based on “The embodiment of the mind and the enbrainment of the body.” (2011, 2)

Expressions such as *ti-ren*, *ti-nian* and *ti-yan* do grant us the kind of structural coupling we need to pursue further the Chinese version of transcendental empiricism in still other compound nouns which fundamentally lean on the *yin* side of things as events or superior empiricism through corporeal transformation, as relations being external to their terms. The modulation of one *yin* and one *yang*, one opening the other closing or opening and closing at the same time, can be considered as having established a kind of “boundaries” which are thus “an evolutionary achievement par excellence” in the biological world. (M. Hansen, 114) I would claim that such opening from closure is amply reflected by the compounds I have presented as expressive assemblages with this *yin-yang* energetics. For illustration, I now come to the expression *guan-xi* 關係 (relation) itself. At this point we must alert ourselves that in order to reiterate its unique compound of both conditioning and conditioned in an order of non-linear succession, we need to break up the two characters and analyze them separately before they can be treated as one single entity of expression. This means that whereas these compounds cannot be broken up in such a symmetrical manner, they are nevertheless linguistic entities and can be dealt with as first closed systems, then open themselves up according to the principle of openness from closure in systems theory.

Now *guan* is the node or knot and *xi* is the link, that which become the basics of graph theory.² It is as if without the empirical elements which at times arbitrarily tie

² In an essay “Experimenting with *What is Philosophy?*” Isabelle Stengers describes Deleuze’s conceptualizing the relation between science and philosophy in terms of Links and Knots: “The production of Links and Knots as the fabrication of an actively diverging adventure echoes Deleuze’s claim that there is no relativity of truth but there is truth only of what is relative... There is a scientific experimental kind of truth because science is relative to the adventure of the creative of Links and Knots to the creation of knots and the production of link as what scientists explore together.” (Stengers, 48) I would claim here that the Chinese *guan-xi*, as an assemblage of the Deleuzian kind of transcendental empiricism, helps to further explain such a relation Stengers has in mind.

things up or link them in a series of things, there will be no need for any stop or door, any fixed and demarcating entity. This stop or door in any relation would be the “transcendental conditions for the sensations and identity of the other individual” in *Difference and Repetition*. (J. Williams: 2003, 209) *Guan* is also the “joint” and “hinge” in Deleuze’s terminology in his “Time is out of joint, time is unhinged. The hinges are the axis around which the door turns,” (*KCP*, vii) and *xi* of course takes up the processes of fluid connectivities which are generated in time. This is how *guan* by itself embraces and is coextensive with the eventful and eventual points or nodes, a stopping of the flow or the network of related and aleatory processes of experience in favour of the “edges” which are the singularities determining the real. *Guan* as the node or fixed, and as macroscopic existence, can be from time to time set free by the molecular *tying* up of entities in an open-eroded process of *xi*, which acts as a “*bricolage*” shot through with folded linkages, ensuring an “ability to rearrange fragments continuously in new and different patterns or configurations.” (*ATP*, 7; 13)

If, however, relation always presupposes a third term, something extra and new as proliferated out of the mutually transformative and reinforcing heterogeneity, then it has to be borne out of a nonlinearity of experience itself. I would therefore argue that the Chinese concept of relation or *guan-xi* coincides with what Deleuze aims to do in *Difference and Repetition*. As J. Williams sums up the book by noting: “The work sets out arguments against the dream of a foundational role for settled truths and identities in ethics. Instead, there is the practical counsel to intensify life as a relation between individuals but with the guidance of one of the most subtle and powerful philosophical creations – a structural account of reality as virtual and actual, where the repetition of intense differences escapes the choking demands of identification.” (J. Williams 2003, 210)

Another compound expression just as important in our context is the term *jing-yan* (experience). Whereas *jing-yan zhu-yi* 經驗主義 is the established translation of the word “empiricism,” *jing* designates an empirical going through of things, and *yan* comes around to mean contemplating and reflecting. *Yan*, however, is a result of “determination” which is “a relating and bringing of order and priority: out of a chaos of unrelated particulars, paths are selected.” (J. Williams: 2011, 30) After all, experience is the very core issue in this paper, since, as Levi Bryant sums it up: “transcendental empiricism is the experience of experience producing experience.” (147) If *yan* is “the critical thought of experience,” itself being “contingent upon an experience” or an “active deployment of the faculties or powers that compose us,” then *jing* is the “description in accordance with the empiricist doctrine of the faculties.” (K. Aarons, 3-4) On the surface the expression seems to privilege the concrete action as primary determination, to be followed by conceptualizing afterward. However, this does not have to be the case if we take the compound in a nuanced or overlapping way that any “sensible,” any tableaux of forces, must rest upon some horizon of the conceptual (transcendental) as foundation for any specific events. If *yan* is a concept, it can only be a concept which performs to give the eventual *jing* consistency, coherence or purpose. A series of *jings* significant to *yans* as stable systems are “signs” which “extend far beyond human language and meaning” in the “probability of triggering a response in a system.” (John Protevi, 22)

The dynamics of both *guan-xi* and *jing-yan* fully expresses Deleuze’s idea that “conditions no broader than the conditioned” being the major concern of his superior

empiricism. (*NP*, 91; *B27*; 30)³ If there is any sense of subjectivity in *jing-yan*, it can only be a subjectivity which “contracts itself as the *measuring of a difference between what we were and what we are becoming*,” and such a contraction is carried out only within “a process that reorganizes our experience around a new problem.” (K. Aarons, 13) Whereas *jing* refers to actual processes folded into one another resulting from the passive synthesis of habit, *yan* could be considered the condition at the point when a specific series of events takes place. Every event of experience, as difference without a model, but always embodied in its temporal and sensuous immediacy, changes what experience is, and everything happens within a cycle that is beyond the subject-object structure of consciousness, and that something bigger is borne out from relation which always keeps itself anew according to each event. Moreover, in terms of Deleuze’s first paradox of memory in *Difference and Repetition*, *jing-yan* exhibits precisely the co-existence of past and present, the “contemporaneity of the past with the present that it was.” With *jing* and *yan* grounded in a non-linear contemporaneity of time, the expression echoes with Deleuze’s two correlative aspects he finds in the active synthesis: “reproduction and reflection, remembrance and recognition, memory and understanding.” (*DR*, 80-81) We will note, therefore, that as one single expression, *jing-yan* which always incorporates a leap between planning and making, liberates the bondage of human agency by stressing the recursive complexities of observation and communication beyond any sense of subjectivity.

Finally, we need to again go into the *yin-yang* elements hidden behind still another collective assemblage enunciating the whole concept of Chinese “culture” *per se*. Culture in the Chinese language is generally referred to as *wen-hua* 文化 (culture)⁴ Morphologically *wen* started out as a human standing up-front with tattoo on the chest. Later it came to mean mixture of colors pattern, language, particularly a plane of composition in language. Primarily a noun, it can be used occasionally as a verb, denoting teaching, composing and decorating, but it can also mean hiding and even making something chaotic. If *wen* has more to do with the ‘plan’ or design,

³ When introducing his studies on Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition*, J. Williams, notes: “So the search for conditions takes place in both directions of the construction of reality: from the virtual to the actual (what Deleuze calls ‘differentiation’) and from the actual to the virtual (‘differentiation’).” (Williams, 2003, 21) In a letter-preface to Jean-Clet Martin, Deleuze writes: “Transcendental empiricism is meaningless indeed unless its conditions are specified. But the transcendental ‘field’ must not be copied from the empirical, as in Kant. It must be explored on its own terms: ‘experienced’ or ‘attempted’ (but it is a very particular type of experience). This is the type of experience that enables the discovery of multiplicities, as well as an exercise of thought” (*TRM*, 36)

⁴ There are controversies as to the origin of the term *wen-hua*. The neo-Confucianist Jian-Mu 錢穆, for example, is of the opinion that both *wen-ming* 文明 (civilization) and *wen-hua* are imported from the West in modern time. See *Introduction to Chinese History of Culture* 《中國文化導論》. However, the term *wen-hua* does exist in a number of classical texts, even though it does not coincide exactly with the way it is used at present. The term in modern usage has become an umbrella expression covering, among other things, all the three major schools of thinking in China, namely Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. It is my argument that an analysis of the very movement of the expression’s morphological elements would open up a pathway towards a nuanced assemblage, kneading together the fundamental characteristic of the Chinese philosophies and Deleuze’s plane of immanence and consistency.

composition and development, the character *hua* should be placed on the side of the plane of immanence and consistency. Etymologically the ideogram *hua* pictures one person standing upright and another upside down, its unmistakable symmetry of contrast makes clear of its disruptive and transformative elements. Henceforth *hua* means changing, particularly changing by teaching within the human communities, even though by itself it also touches on the cosmic transformation as expressed by the phrase *ta-hua mi-yi* 大化密移 (big-change moves intensively). Such an attunement to the lived world shared by humans and non-humans designates a kind of Deleuzian involution, opening up the cosmos more than it is. There is therefore no doubt that *hua* takes up a role of the immanently conditioned of the real in a way that would give support to Deleuze's ontology of univocity, and together, *wen-hua* with a sense of unity across time, or rather "a space-time consolidation, of coexistence and succession," (ATP, 329) is equipped with a double-bind of a transcendental horizon, and immanently as the condition to empirical experience of reality in which all beings express themselves in a single sense or voice.

The very pictorial design of the two ideograms *wen* and *hua* with both pattern and change firmly grounded in body shapes, and with their embodied implications rippling through the whole of Chinese culture across centuries, could be considered the source of all the compounds we have introduced so far, including, say, the clusters of expressions with the body *ti* as embodiment. One should also note here that *hua* of *wen-hua* performs a job putting *wen* back to action and duration, guarding *wen* which is inclined towards stratification, forms and structures from being covered up by fixed identities. Despite its development side, *wen* runs the risk of being turned into the plane of transcendence rather than a transcendental horizon, since it has the tendency towards the striated space of actualization.⁵ But with the disruptive force of change and transformation, it is *hua* which ensures culture (*wen-hua*) to be on the track of oscillating or swinging back and forth between striated and smooth spaces, between differentiation and differentiation, between evolution and involution, individuated beings and becomings of all kinds. The two combined, "one molar, the other molecular," and "they coexist and crossover into each other" (ATP 213) as one lexical item. The pure flow of *hua* provides intensities to nomadic singularities of pure becoming, in that the sense of depth having been constructed by the strata of *wen* can be replaced by lines, rhizomes and assemblages of diagrams, thus giving rise to the diagrammatic or cartographic delineation of the horizontal *xiang-shu* 象數 (mathematics of phenomena) in *Yijing* 《易經》, the primordial source of changes in nature and culture pre-dating all of the schools of thought in China. *Wen* and *hua*, combined as a lexical item referring to culture can be located in the working of overlapping of planes "one continually reconstitutes one plane atop another or extricates as an immense machine one from the other," (ATP: 269) only in the case of Chinese culture, such an assemblage as an immense machine would not become organs of functions as with structure but only assemblages, and they will not be guided towards the "principle of analogy from the stand point of organization." (ATP, 269) As we can see here, that if *wen* is a spatial

⁵ François Zourabichvili reminds us to "Keep in mind that the 'transcendental,' which must not be confused with 'transcendent,' has since Kant been related to a questioning of the *conditions* under which thought experiments, which is to say enters into relation with something that does not depend upon it." (75)

register, *hua* would designate time; if *wen* points to identity, *hua* would be dissolving the identity through a fissuring and cracking process in time. Together, *wen-hua* simply reaffirms Deleuze's understanding of Chinese thought as relatively transcendental, and that it does not make any claim beyond the limits of experience in time. If we attribute this relativity of *wen* as a condition to the empirical *hua*, this can only be under a situation where "difference as the condition of identity rather than identity as the condition of difference," (Bryant, 182) and this is exactly what Deleuze refers to as "internal Difference which establishes an *a priori* relation between thought and being." (DR, 86)

In fact, we have given much attention to *Daodejing* in terms of, say, the natural natures of the *yin-yang* assemblage when the difference of Two giving rise to multiple happenings of matter and life through the unfurling function of *shi* 勢 as trajectory of directional movement. *Hua* appears here, as "All things (*wanwu* 萬物) would be able to develop their own lines. Having developed along their own lines were they to desire to depart from this." (Ames and Hall, 2003, 134) The term *zi-hua* 自化 comes to connote self-changing and *yu-zuo* 欲作 (desire to operate), together they can be related to the biological idea of autopoiesis and Deleuze's desiring machine, both eschewing the sway of the human subject. Right now we should emphasize that this *hua* functions as the cracking open of any binary structure as the emanative power of *dao*, flushing up energies or *chi* 氣 towards the harmonious *he* 和 (balance, harmony), much in the spirit of Deleuze's concept of "interconnectedness provided by the conjunction *AND* which is always in between, between two things; it is borderline, there's always a border, a line of flight or flow ... (N, 45) Turning to *Zhuangzi*, we find, to our amazement, that *hua* is brought forward, with all the events being always their own emergence of life and matters, as *wu-hua* 物化, but such a great scale of transformation with intensity is curiously staged up-front as the conclusion of the famous story in which *Zhuang Zhou* dreamed of the butterfly:

I, by the name of *Zhuang Zhou*, once dreamed that I was a butterfly, a butterfly fluttering happily here and there. I was so pleased that I forgot that I was *Zhuang Zhou*. When I woke up, I was astonished to find that I was as a matter of fact *Zhuang Zhou*. Did *Zhuang Zhou* dream of the butterfly or did the butterfly dream of *Zhuang Zhou*? Between *Zhuang Zhou* and the butterfly there must be some distinctions. This is called "the transformation of things," (*wu-hua* 物化).

Here we should be attentive to details of the very beginning words of this short passage. Right away we have a positing of a name and a remote past, creating a sense of distance, a split of a *Zhuang Zhou* in the past and the enunciator of the fable. This ambiguity, established by the splitting of two subjects, succeeds to blur the border lines between any subject-object duality so as to pave the way for the co-existence of the man and the butterfly in the dream. Such a dream points to, as Braidotti has it, a "post-identitarian, non-unitary and transversal subjectivity based on relations with human and non-human others." (2013, 172) As an encounter, this dream forces us to pose a problem; and as an event, it replaces 'is' with infinitive becomings. Besides, the effort of dramatization is of course an echo of Deleuze's intensity in relation to the process of

individuation. (*DR*, 245) Here, “thought is folded back onto sensibility.” (J. Hughes, 171) Zhuangzi’s tactic here is to experiment with the way “to retain, the illusion of ‘identity’ while acknowledging the fact that identity is nothing but being thrown in a maelstrom of contingency and arbitrariness.” (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 62) However, the repetitive reference (four times) to Zhou the name (there is no “I” appearing in the original text, only Zhou as a third person) helps to remind us the existence of an implied observer who goes in and out of the dream.

And there is more than one dream in the fable: the first being fully dramatized to enact an eventful performativity in accord with the natural tendency, the very *ti-shi* 體勢 of a non-human living being, then the next dream, a bigger and on another level kind of dream comes in. It comes as a reflection, an enactment of *yan* 驗 on the dreamer’s experience or his *jing* 經. This bigger dream is now worked up and intensified by the enunciator of the fable through a sense of defamiliarization of who Zhou is, and what selfhood, subjectivity and identity amount to within this spiraling of *jing-yan*. This in and out of the dreams points to Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism defined as “the experience of experience producing experience.” (L. Bryant, 147) To leverage the partial autonomy of the subject in the dream where Zhou being a butterfly, even things in the surrounding have to be vivid so as to be correlated with the butterfly’s environment. But then the subjectivity of the enunciator after the awakening is put into the second dream of the contingency of all observations. The distinction made at the end, therefore, is a non-distinction, only a wishful hope for the capacity of any subject to “handle” distinctions in general. What Zhuangzi arrives at becomes something not unlike what Ira Livingston calls “radical middleground.” What Zhuangzi calls “the transformation of things,” the *wu-hua* 物化 situates itself precisely at this “being-in-the-middle,” the middle at “the edge-of-chaos between order and disorder” which “throws figure and ground in question.” (254) I would even argue, such a conundrum presents itself in a kind of poetic rhythm, a paean to an anti-foundationalism based on a concept of germinal life. It is also something which echoes Deleuze and Guattari’s description of the vibratory milieu: “What chaos and rhythm have in common is the in-between -- between two milieus, rhythm-chaos or the chaosmos: ‘Between night and day, between that which is constructed and that which grows naturally, between mutations from the inorganic to the organic, from plant to animal, from animal to humankind’” (*ATP*, 313)

Zhuangzi’s dream of him being a butterfly and the butterfly Zhou is precisely an embodied recognition that we are all “fragments of the dreams of others” (Livingston, 258)⁶ These fragments, relinquishing the sense of identity in rhythm, open up the possibility of various kinds of alternative, of the subaltern embedded in bodily recognition (*ti-ren* 體認). This middle ground, in sharp contrast with the *yang* preponderance toward essentialism and representation of the ‘figure’ in Confucianism,

⁶ It is interesting to note that Livingston chooses another dream motif by Borges as epigraph of his essay to make his point across. The passage reads: “He walked into the shreds of flame. But they did not bite into his flesh, they caressed him and engulfed him without heat or combustion. With relief, with humiliation, with terror, he understood that he too was an appearance, dreamt by another.” (Livingston, 246) There is, however, no sentiments of relief, humiliation or terror on the part of Zhuangzi’s dreams.

is an emergent intermedial space at the very edge of chaos, the incessant flow of a myriad events in conjunction with the *Shi* 勢 forces of the *yin-yang* assemblage. The transformation (the *wu-hua*) of Zhou into a butterfly and vice versa become a delightful recognition of the mutual reinforcement of emergence and embodiment, and the bodies of Zhou/butterfly live happily as Deleuze's body-without-organs. Human entities of the given and even bodily organs are poisonous for such *ti-xian* 體現 (bodily emergent and appearing); and here we remember yet another fable in *Zhuangzi* which gives a light-hearted description as to how the *yang* or the humanist side of two kings "kill" their friend "king chaos" out of good will. Again we have here another fable which draws upon the *yin* power and turn chaos to something affirmative. *Zhuangzi*'s narratives belong to "narratives of bodily transformation" which are "allegorical beings that index systematic complexes, dissolving the buffer of reality in a mobile discontinuity. Their altered bodies convey the materialities of their own mediated being and the forms of the psychic and social systems in the environments to which their media couple them." (Bruce Clarke: 2008, 193)

Abbreviations for Deleuze and Guattari's Works:

- ATP Deleuze and Guattari. (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota P.
- B Deleuze. (1988) *Bergsonism*. Trans. Constantin Boundas. New York: Zone.
- DR Deleuze. (1994) *Difference and Repetition*. Trans. Paul Patton. New York: Columbia UP.
- ES *Empiricism and Subjectivity*. (1991) Trans. C.V. Boundas. New York: Columbia UP.
- KCP *Kant's Critical Philosophy*. (1984) Trans. H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam. Minneapolis, MN: U. of Minnesota P.
- N *Negotiations 1971-1990*. (1995) Trans. M. Joughin. New York: Columbia UP.
- NP *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. (1983) Trans. Hugh Tomlinson. New York: Columbia UP.
- WP Deleuze and Guattari. (1994) *What Is Philosophy?* Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell. New York: Columbia UP.

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Tinglish: A Textual Phenomenon of Creative English in Thai Society

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Abstract. The terms ‘Tinglish’ and ‘Thai English’ have often been interchangeably used. They have also been misunderstood as a synonymous notion that represents a broken form of English in Thailand. This paper thus attempts to prove that ‘Tinglish’ is a sub-variety of ‘Thai English’, which has not been widely accepted as another type of New Englishes. It aims to analyze sociolinguistic features of Tinglish in different genres of English written texts produced by Thais and non-Thais - magazines, literary works, academic books, tourist signboards, menus, and advertising websites. With the use of an integrated framework that combines Platt et al’ (1984) lectal varieties of New Englishes and studies in Thai English, an analysis reveals that Tinglish represents lexical, phonological, syntactic and stylistic characteristics of English usage in Thai society. Such features thus convey more creative than idiosyncratic senses and contribute to a unique phenomenon of Thai identity in English.

Keywords: Tinglish, Thai English, creative English

1 Introduction

English is not considered a local language in Thailand as in other countries in the ASEAN region – Singapore, the Philippines, and Malaysia. A regional variety of English in the three countries is differently addressed: Singapore English, Philippine English, and Malaysian English. However, the notion of Thai English has not been pointed out. In those neighbors, sub-varieties of English are used by the locals – Singlish, Taglish, and Manglish, respectively – as a linguistic reflection of the nation building after the colonization period. On the contrary, the term ‘Tinglish’ is viewed as a rotten form of English expressed by lower-class Thais, so it is still controversial. The terms ‘Singlish’, ‘Taglish’ and ‘Manglish’ are contextualized as a powerful language in domains of education, business, media, and everyday use, etc. In contrast to this, ‘Tinglish’ is ridiculously viewed. Hence, this paper challenges the facet of Tinglish. It aims to describe linguistic forms of Tinglish in English written texts grounded in Thai socio-cultural elements. This will lead to a proof that Tinglish is expressed in more innovation than an error product by Thais. This will also highlight a textual phenomenon of creative English in Thailand as it is in her neighbors.

2. Theoretical Foundation and Relevant Studies in Thai English

'Thai English' has not been recognized as a full non-native variety due to several reasons. Mostly Thais cannot speak or write in English to foreigners. Further, a few Thais communicate to each other in English as Indians and Singaporeans are doing. Importantly, the use of English in Thai society has been relying on British and American English Standard; the term 'a Thai variety of English' has been neglected by the locals as it is viewed as 'Tinglish' or a broken form of English by Thais (Bennui, 2013). Many people have understood that Thai English is equal to 'Tinglish', so they are not proud of declaring that Thai English carries deficient English performance. Indeed, this belief is not true. The term 'Tinglish' is part of Thai English but it does not entirely portray a Thai variety of English. There appears to be Thai English in relation to three hierarchical lectal varieties – acrolect, mesolect and basilect – the terms coined by Platt et al (1984). The highest variety, acrolect, is that overseas-educated Thais use spoken and written English with a near-native command, but they suitably use Thai words, grammar, and styles for only pragmatic functions. These users construct Standard Thai English. Meanwhile, the mesolect variety is that Thais with the moderate level of English slightly perform unintentional deviations in communications. On the one hand, the basilect variety is that lower-educated Thais usually express incorrect or simplified English in both everyday conversations and written forms. Such expressions are the so-called Tinglish. However, the majority of Thai English users are of the second and last groups, so they seem to orally make Thai English as a deficient variety. Indeed, Tinglish is often found spoken by Thais rather than acrolectal and mesolectal Thai English which somewhat appears in written texts. Consequently, Tinglish is a sub-emerging variety of Thai English. There appears to be Thai English as a variety but this variety is still developing and has not yet reached a certain level of maturity because the influence of native English has been strongly embedded in Thais' views (Bennui, 2013).

The notion of 'Tinglish' is illustrated by a number of scholars. According to Martyn (2012), features of Tinglish are seen in the following examples: (i) the use of the adverb 'already' in present tense instead of past tense (e.g. Somchai goes to Bangkok already); (ii) an addition of Thai final particles namely 'na' and 'la' for giving a suggestion and 'ja' for giving informality to a conversation (e.g. "I won't see you next week na" and "Good morning ja"); (iii) an addition of extra vowels in pronouncing consecutive consonants (e.g. 'Sprite' pronounced 'Sa-pa-rite'); and (iv) the pronunciation of the retroflex sound /r/ as the lateral sound /l/ (e.g. living loom). Additionally, Todd (2004) states that Tinglish is the art of selecting the English language to suit Thais' thought patterns in simpler forms. However, Tinglish for written communication influenced by a sequence of Thai sentence should be edited. Its instance in unedited news is "*He said the panel will pass on its report to the UN*".

Kravanja (2011) presents the most popular phrase of Thai English, especially 'Tinglish' namely "same same, but different", usually used in a conversation between the Thai locals and foreign tourists. This expression is indeed defined as 'equality and difference'. This phrase is illustrated as follows:

A foreign tourist:	"Is this Armani?"
A Thai market vendor:	"Same same, but different"

The phrase in this context means “it is actually a good copy”. Moreover, it can be used to express almost anything, ranging from “actual relations between the things” to “ironic joking about these relations”. Moreover, it is also used to express statements like “I don’t know much about it” or “I know something, but I do not want to explain (or do not feel like explaining) it to you right know”. Additionally, this phrase is often seen as a linguistic strategy in several channels, such as a T-shirt slogan, public signs and the characteristic nature of lady-boys in Thailand. Indeed, Kravanja’s (2011) views on Tenglish are authentic but it is still unclear as the term ‘Tenglish’ seems to entirely mirror Thai English.

Different from Kravanja (2011), Klausner-Nathan (2004) does not state that ‘Tenglish’ is directly characteristic of Thai English. Instead, she provides illustrations of words and phrases collected from menus in English translated by Thais in order to support the notion of Tenglish in Thai cuisine. Examples are “Papaya *Pok Pok*” (Papaya salad), “Snake Fish in Garden” (fried snake fish served on a platter with traditional Thai condiments and garnish), and “American Fried Rice” (fried rice served with fried eggs and sausages in relation to the eating habit of the American army in the 60s in Thailand). Overall, this is more an anecdote of expressions transferred from Thai cultural items into English, but it reflects the way Thais create their English words from their points of view.

The following present empirical studies on Tenglish. Kaneungpian (2007) found that Tenglish is a unique English feature of Thai recreational users of web boards, especially, the use of Thai grammar, pronunciation and/or thinking patterns while speaking or writing English, such as “...I think of two kinds of animals – two snakes and two fish 55555. Do u understand?” Besides, Bennui and Hashim (2014) examine features of stylistic creativity in Thai English fiction. Tenglish, part of textual creativity, is found in a conversation between TC (Taninsak Chainarongwan), a Thai Member of Parliament, and Elizabeth. Elizabeth uses a range of mesolect to acrolect varieties of English while TC entirely performs the basilectal variety. TC provides ungrammatical sentences and brings Thai words: “Ah, you go Esarn. Many good, Khun Lisabet. Many Kroongtep people no go Esarn. My *ketluektang* (constituency) is in Esarn, so now I push airport there...”, and “...We eat rice together when I come back from New York. Okay?” Both Kaneungpian (2007) as well as Bennui and Hashim (2014)’ studies are evident that Tenglish is of the colloquial variety of Thai English used by Thai people.

Those concepts and studies bring an insight into linguistic layers of Tenglish expressions - morphology, semantics, phonology, syntax and stylistics. Importantly they yield what Platt et al (1984) refer to the lowest level of New Englishes under his framework, namely *Post-Creole Continuum*, or certain situations where people use English-based Creole for educational and communicative purposes. This work is applied to this paper. Many Thais are able to communicate in Tenglish forms in different situations as mentioned. The extent to which Tenglish expressions are formed in texts is to be examined using this work.

3 Features of Tenglish in Written Texts

To describe features of Tenglish as a representation of English in use by Thai people requires its analysis through various texts. The following instances are created by both Thai and non-Thai users of English but all are characteristic of the way Thai people attempt to express themselves in English. Such texts are excerpts taken from different genres – magazines, literary works, academic books, tourist signboards, menus, and advertising websites. Each is composed of different instances that will be linguistically discussed so that the image of Tenglish will be lightened.

3.1 Magazines

The following taken from certain columns in particular English language magazines published in Thailand are written and edited by both Thais and foreigners; however, they intend to show some features of a basilectal variety of English used by Thais.

Example 1

Rice. More than just a staple, it has profound aspects of national and cultural identity, stands as a symbol of health, wellbeing and longevity, and permeates art, music, folklore and even language. Instead of simply saying “go eat” in Thai (bpai gin), Thais almost always say “eat rice,” (bpai gin khao) to refer to the general act of eating; a simple testament to its importance in the everyday lives of Thai people. (Ingrained culture, 2014, p. 30)

This example depicts two outstanding points of the use of Tenglish – the sayings “go eat” and “eat rice”. Though they are based on translation in which transliteration is parenthesized, they show the way Thais simply order the two expressions with their L1 word order. Thais always use the verb ‘go’ for many phrasal verbs beyond the form ‘go eat’ such as ‘go sit’ (*bpai nang*) and ‘go look’ (*bpai doo*), etc. Further, Thais hardly use the standard English form ‘have rice’ since the verb ‘have’ seems to indicate more formal than the verb ‘eat’, which fits a casual style of Thai life.

Example 2

Thai Sabai reflects one of the most outstanding Thai characters which is “Sabai Sabai”.
 “Sabai” translates as “happy” but closer to comfortable, relax or well.
 (Mekhong: The spirit of Thailand, 2014, p. 21)

Similarly, the reduplicating item ‘*sabai sabai*’ is indicative of Thais’ simple life. Here, its transliteration is mixed in English sentences since it is commonly known by foreigners, especially in major tourist provinces. This mixing makes a textual hybridity. In this regard, the expression ‘*sabai sabai*’ can mirror the form of Tenglish even though its equivalent translation is given. That is, its translation does not appear to be ‘happy happy’ that sounds odd. However, using this item in its reduplication form presents the very non-formal form of English of its Thai word.

Example 3

Rawn nai, or “hot inside” is a condition with no English-language equivalent.

The body feels hot and “cooling” foods are supposed to alleviate it.

(Sukphisit, 2012, p. 22)

Likewise, the term ‘hot inside’ represents a directly translated term of the Thai item ‘*Rawn nai*’. However, this translation does not yield the full meaning of the Thai collocation. The correct translation can be equivalent to many medical terms such as *apthous ulcer*, *aferothermodynamics*, *diathermy*, *furnace*, and *heart burn* (Metamedia Technology, 2003). Alternatively the most appropriate term should be ‘internal heat’. Nevertheless, all these terms do not support the direct translation of the Thai item; only the remaining one is – /Rawn/ (hot) + /nai/ (inside). This simple way of translation thus enhances an incorrect but creative English item of the Thai culture.

In those journalistic texts, Tenglish is mostly made up of Thai loanwords, literal translation and semantic-grammatical elements of spoken communication.

3.2 Literary Works

Literary works here refer to fictional and non-fictional writings in English in which thematic elements involve Thailand and Thai lives. They are mainly taken from narratives and dialogues the writers construct. They are full of Tenglish grammatical patterns with the influence of Thai structure.

Example 1

...There were taxis parked in lines and Thai faces everywhere, and the taxi touts milling about and talking loudly. Emma was feeling overwhelmed and disoriented.

But everything happened fast and she soon found herself sitting in the back of a small green and red Nissan taxi, their rucksacks stowed safely in the boot.

The driver was smiley and communicative.

‘Okay you go Khao San Road? First time in Thailand?’

‘Yes’ said Ben, doing the talking.

‘You married already?’

‘No, we’re students.’

‘Farangs have money, so why you not married?’ (Hicks, 2006)

This fiction shows an authentic style of Tenglish, especially the grammar of English used by the character ‘Taxi driver’, even though the writer is a non-Thai. The expressions ‘Okay you go Khao San Road? First time in Thailand?’, ‘You married already?’ and ‘Farangs have money, so why you not married?’ can be modified as ‘Okay, *did* you go *to* Khao San road? *Is it* your first time in Thailand?’, ‘Are you married?’, and ‘Farangs have *a lot of* money, so why *are* you not married?’ However, the writer does not use the correct sentences as he wants the reader to understand the way a Thai taxi driver communicates in poor English grammar with a foreigner. It is noticeable that all sentences in Tenglish reflect the word order in Thai grammar. For example, the adverb ‘already’ or /laew/ is an indicator of time and tense of the past form in Thai grammar. Thai people often use this word to confirm their understanding

in English. In contrast, the Standard English sentence ‘Are you married?’ indicates the present time of the marital status of the interlocutor but it has no any linguistic element to make this sound Thai. Moreover, the word ‘farangs’ is widely used to replace the term ‘westerners’ or ‘white people’ and it is a Thai English lexicon found worldwide. In this context, using its hybrid form – an English suffix ‘s’ is added to a Thai word ‘farang’ – seems to make this sentence more non-Standard English.

Example 2

“Good morning, Luaek”, he mumbled, as boldly as he dared. “Did you sleep well?” “My name Lek”, she pouted, “and no. I not sleep good. You want shag me in bum and I not like. You hit me too much! I not happy. Maybe I go police tell them ’bout you. Police take you Monkey House and man shag you in bum and you not like same same me”. (Jones, 2012, p. 111)

Similarly, this dialogue represents ineffective English used by a Thai prostitute character. Particular expressions of Tenglish are found; the correct ones are given in the brackets – “My name (is) Lek”, “I (did) not sleep good (well)”, “You want(ed) to shag me in (my bum) and I (did) not like (that)”, “You hit me too much (many times)! I (was) not happy”, “Maybe I (will) go (to) (the) police (station) (to) tell them (police officers) ’bout you. (The) police (will) take you (to) (the) Monkey House and man (prisoners) (will) shag you in (your) bum and you (will) not like same same (the same as) me”. The writer is a non-Thai but he creates a spoken English scenario of a Thai character that authentically communicates in rotten English with a foreign character. Overall, these Tenglish utterances take place in terms of present and past simple verbs, modality, articles, infinitives and possessive pronouns.

Example 3

Four: the English I was used to was spoken by immigrants. Sentences without linking verbs: “We Thai.” Unnecessary I-N-Gs: “I liking apple much.” My family spoke with different stresses on words. Strawberry into stlaw-BER-ly. Casino into CA-sano. They confused similar sounding words, which often yielded great laughter, not at their mistake, but at the silliness of the English language... (Sukrungruang, 2010, p. 7)

This autobiography’s narrative represents Tenglish expressed by a Thai American resident. The writer remembered that his family members possessed broken English. For Tenglish utterances here, their grammatical and phonological elements are highlighted. The expressions “We Thai” must be “We are Thai” and “I liking apple much” must be “I like Apple very much” while the words “stlaw-BER-ly” and “CA-sa-no” must be “straw-Be-ri” and “Ca-si-no”. This shows Thai migrants have deficient grammatical ability and are more acquainted with the Thai accent when uttering English words. As a whole, this example colors the reality of Thais’ English proficiency.

Those literary texts exhibit that Tenglish expressions are intentionally created as speech patterns of Thai protagonists who are not fluent in oral English due to the influence of their L1 non-standard syntactic and phonological elements.

3.3 Academic Texts

Academic texts here are taken mainly from research papers on two major fields – sociology and politics. There is only a text derived from a guide book on health, namely massaging. Although this text type has a formal language style, the use of Tenglish expressions still appears as a rhetorical function.

Example 1

Prior to the 1970s, bar workers at hostess bars were usually unpaid freelance phantom workers who served drinks to customers but did not appear on the bar's official records, and thus were sometimes referred to as *ba phi* or bar ghosts. (Stenfatt, 2002, p. 34)

This excerpt highlights the use of a Tenglish word, namely 'bar ghosts', as an equivalent translation of its Thai item '*ba phi*'. This translation creates the Tenglish form. Indeed, the correct version 'ghost bar' does not make this academic text meets the Thai way of English usage. Hence, the remaining version is indicative of an incorrect but meaningful form that sheds the light on Tenglish.

Example 2

In turn, while some military elites cooperated with the new parties most others resorted to intrigues, weakening each of the parties in order to found yet another party, *Thai Rak Thai* ("Thai Love Thai"), bolstering his bid for the prime ministership in 2001. (Case, 2002, pp. 158-159)

Likewise, the Tenglish form in this political writing appears because of mistranslation. In several medias in Thailand and worldwide, the translation item 'Thai Love Thai' is more widely used than its correct one 'Thais Love Thais'. The former item is still used because of the author's intention. The author probably realizes the underlying meaning of the word 'Thai' that means 'Thai citizen' but he does not use the correct one. That is, the remaining one seems to convey a sense of Thai ethnics or Thai language, for instance, even though Thai readers probably know its actual meaning. Overall, the expression 'Thai Love Thai' is the very Tenglish form as its incorrect version has been typically used instead of 'Thais Love Thais'.

Example 3:

"Same-same, but different"

"Same-same, but different" is one of the most common expressions spoken in throughout Thailand. Whether learning a Thai Massage School, ordering drinks on an island beach, or shopping at a night bazaar, Thais use this express to answer many farang or foreign questions:

"What's the difference between palm pressing the leg and foot palm pressing the leg?"

"Same-same, but different"

"What's the difference between the pineapple shake and the pineapple smoothie?" "Same-same, but different"

"What's the difference between that 150 baht blue tee shirt, and the other identical long-looking tee shirt that costs 200 baht?"

"Same-same, but different" (Reed and Errico-Reed, 2014, p. 2)

The expression ‘same-same but different’ here is the uniqueness of Tenglish. This is thoroughly comprehended by Thai readers and interlocutors. It means “they are quite the same but they are a bit different” in this context. Thai people with low English competence get difficulty in structuring the correct form; they are more familiar with the reduplicating term ‘same-same’ than the term ‘the same’. However, this Tenglish form has its contradictory meaning. That is, foreigners may be confused with it – whether it is ‘similar or different’ - as the word ‘same’ is more intensified or repeated than the word ‘different’. In short, this is the very Tenglish form that has been mistakenly used in the acceptable meaning among Thais and foreigners.

Academically, Tenglish expressions are formed via the process of literal translation based on Thai structure and a reduction of semantic-grammatical elements.

3.4 Tourist Signboards

Tourist signboards used, a textual evidence of linguistic landscape of a tourist site in a society, publicly appear in certain websites. In the cyber society, such signboards mirror ridiculous forms of English created by Thai users to the global readership. However, this paper intends to depict the way the boards address their Tenglish sense.

Figure 1. Tenglish in signboards



(Sawasdee, 2000, 2010)

This hybrid text is created due to a translation strategy. Nevertheless, the mistranslation leads to consideration of Tenglish. It is noted that the verified expressions should be “Please beware of the alarm sound!” or “Please beware of the siren!” This Tenglish form occurs because the board translator seems to use the verb ‘believe’ instead of the verb ‘beware’.

Figure 2. Tenglish in signboards



(Cartsen, 2005)

The above solely English signboard has three features of Tenglish. The first one relies on the use of the nouns ‘KOH TAO BOWLING & MINI-GOLF’. This misuse happens because of the reduction of their full nouns – Koh Tao Bowling *Alley* & Mini Golf *Course*’ or ‘Koh Tao Bowling *Green* & Mini Golf *Club*’. However, the text creator probably thinks that only the nouns ‘bowling’ and ‘golf’ are sufficiently used as the words of an advertising strategy and foreign tourists have understood such words. The most outstanding one is the use of the expression ‘...WE ARE CLOSED’. This seems to be meaningful. It is correct that the passive form ‘closed’ is used here, but the subject and verb complement – “We Are” is very Tenglish. That is, this form represents the subjects ‘KOH TAO BOWLING & MINI-GOLF’. The board creator is confused with the use of the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘they’. In this context, the latter third person pronoun is the correct one. Further, another interesting feature falls into the widely used Tenglish form ‘same same but different’. In this sense, the owner of the Koh Tao Bowling & Mini-Golf intends to mean that ‘the opening hours are the same with different times’. This may confuse the readers or foreign tourists because the specific time is not given. Hence, the appearance of the time has been known by only regular customers of this bowling green and mini golf club, not the new comers.

Figure 3. Tenglish in signboards



(Monkey Abroad, 2013)

Similarly, the use of the pronoun ‘we’ is also used in the above tourist signboard as the voice of the text creator or the owner of Ao Sane Bungalow, Phuket. This text is mainly indicative of Tenglish because of the verbal use of active voices instead of passive voices. This is seen in the expressions ‘We will lock the wheel’ and ‘Fine 1000 B’. They convey the direct translation of Thai into English. In this regard, the use of the letter ‘B’ for the abbreviation of ‘Baht’ is somewhat acceptable and meaningful. Between these two expressions, there should be another expression to link – ‘unlocking requires paying 1,000 Baht for fine’, for instance. Moreover, the gerund ‘parking’ is wrongly expressed here as it shows that the imperative verb ‘park’ is not used. Further, the phrase ‘in the way’ is not clear in English. The owner of this bungalow seems to express ‘the way’ in Thai, namely in the area or along the walking street to this bungalow, but he or she does not write any specific word to replace the word ‘the way’. Overall, the correct passive form of the English expressions should be. “DON’T PARK YOUR CAR HERE. ITS WHEELS WILL BE LOCKED. THEY WILL BE UNLOCKED AFTER 1,000 BAHT OF FINE IS PAIED”, for example.

These correct English expressions are very long, causing the limited board space. The remaining Tenglish sentences are more helpful though they carry errors in

translation and a reduction of grammatical elements.

3.5 Menus

Menus here are retrieved from online sources of the authentic menus available in restaurants around Thailand. Tinglesh expressions in this text type obviously occur because of mistranslation.

Figure 4: Tinglesh in menus



(Facebook, 2014)

This beverage menu taken from bars and restaurants in Thai hotels due to the most outstanding Thai brand – SINGHA. These expressions are Tinglesh because of phonological and morphological factors. The first word ‘Alcohol’ stands for ‘Alcohol Beverage’. It is misspelled as it reflects Thais’ mispronunciation of the vowel /au/. Meanwhile the words ‘Rum with cock’ and ‘Vodka with sprit’ are very funny; the former menu creates an American taboo while the latter brings a sail equipment. These misspelled words should be ‘Rum with Coke’ (Coca Cola) and ‘Vodka with Sprite’. These two Tinglesh expressions are created with the brands of the popular carbonated beverage in Thailand.

Figure 5. Tinglesh in menus

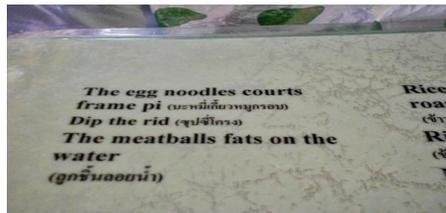


(Brown, 2011)

‘Tinglesh’ in the above menu appears in the use of ‘spicy salad’. The translation for the first two items is correct but the word ‘dressing’ is missing. The first one is also a very long phrase – the word ‘serve’ should be deleted although it can be in the form ‘served’. That is, it should be ‘Fried Cashew Nuts in Spicy Salad Dressing’. Meanwhile, the second menu must be ‘Seaweed in Spicy Salad Dressing’. For the last menu, this food in the Thai language is not cooked in the form of salad; however, it thus must be ‘Fresh Shrimp in Fish Sauce’. Further, the third menu shows its misuse of lexico-semantic elements of Thai-English words in translation. The word ‘relative(s)’ is used for a human being. It is used here as the Thai word ‘*yart*’ means ‘relative’; it is directly translated without consideration of its equivalent form of Thai

sense. This menu is ‘mixing several kinds of seafood and meats in salad’, so it should be ‘mixed salad’. Overall, these menus make a sense of humor for Thai customers but they confuse foreigners.

Figure 6. Tenglish in menus



(Facebook, 2014)

Those menus taken from a Chinese restaurant in Thailand are indicative of Tenglish expressions due to mistranslation. All should be translated in short phrases but they appear in sentences that make the food’s names long. The first one is that the subject ‘the egg noodles’ is followed by the verb ‘courts’ and the object ‘frame pi’. This object has its missing letter ‘g’ at the end of the word ‘pi’, so it should actually be translated as ‘frame pig’. However, the expression ‘the egg noodles court(s) frame pig’ is very awkward. The word ‘egg noodles’ is acceptable though it should be ‘Wonton noodle’. This Hong Kong English word is rarely used in Thailand but rather found in Singapore and Malaysian English. The verb ‘court’ is used to replace its equivalent term in Thai /giaw/ or ‘flirt’ due to the influence of Thai mispronunciation when translated. Further, the word ‘frame pig’ is very confusing. The word ‘frame’ is synonymous to ‘crispy’ because of the Thai mispronunciation influence on translation – the Thai word ‘*krob*’ is equivalent to a noun ‘picture frame’ and an adjective ‘crispy’; Thais hardly know the word ‘crispy’ rather than the word ‘frame’. Meanwhile, the word ‘pig’ is often used for ‘pork’ by Thai people, so the correct version of this menu is ‘Wonton noodle with crispy pork’. The second menu lies in the imperative form. The word ‘dip’ is used as it is referred to the verb ‘sink’ or ‘boil’ in this context; the correct word must be ‘soup’. Chinese restaurants offer more ‘pork’ menus than ‘beef’ ones, so this menu is supposed to be ‘Pork rib soup’. The third one is caused by the misuse of the adjective ‘fat’ instead of the verb ‘float’ if this translation will make the menu with its sentence – ‘The meatballs float on the water’. This is grammatical but has a pragmatic failure. The correct one should be ‘floating meatballs’ but it does not sound Tenglish. All the menus are complicated for foreigners to understand but simple for Thais although no Thai terms are given.

Obviously an emergence of Tenglish in the above menus is due to a mistranslation or word-for-word translation strategy which is caused by Thai-English interface on phonological, morphological, semantic and grammatical units.

3.6 Advertising Websites

Many kinds of advertising websites are posted online. Only those for tourism advertising, especially for tour packages in Thailand, are loaded as they contain a range

of Tenglish expressions which provide foreign customers with understandable messages. However, they convey the influence of Thai structural and cultural loads in the form of English that are worthy considered as a creative element of Thai English.

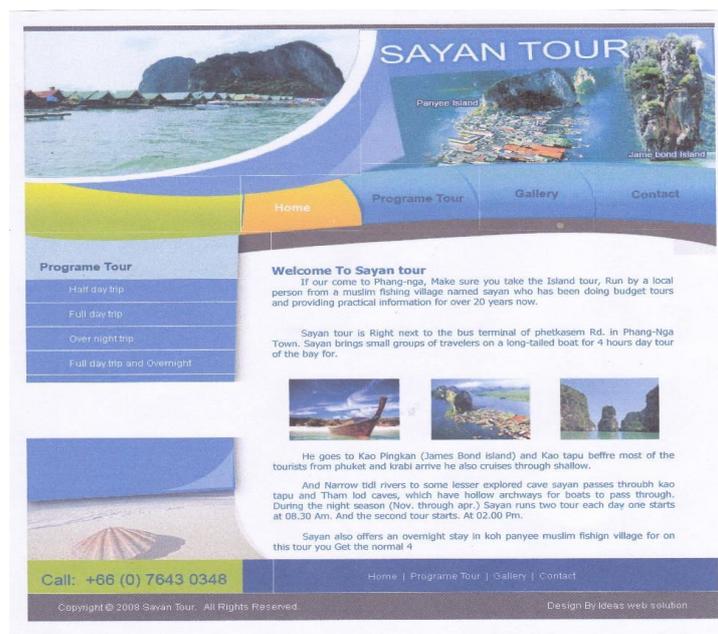
Figure 7. Tenglish in advertising websites



(Kanchanaburi Tour Center, n.d.)

The information in this website has a sense of Tenglish due to a long sentence style, not grammatical mistakes. This text consists of only three sentences. The longest one – “We at K.T.C are successfully...the most out of Kanchanaburi” – is full of many clauses due to the influence of Thai structure. The Thai language has no punctuation marks, especially periods. This causes a length of Thai sentences, affecting the way this sentence is translated or written in English. That is, three new sentences can be broken down or restarted such as “We are fully licensed by”, “Our staff are local....” and “With our well trained,...we feel that we are...” Meanwhile, the two other sentences are not lengthy. Indeed, some idiosyncrasies in this text are found – ‘T.A.T’ should be ‘Tourism Authority of Thailand’, ‘a local knowledge’ must not have the article ‘a’, and ‘the provence of Kanchanaburi’ should be ‘Kanchanaburi Province’. These features parallel Tenglish forms rather than other linguistic elements of a higher level of Thai English.

Figure 8. Tenglish in advertising websites (Sayan Tour, 2008)



A variety of Tenglish expressions is obvious in this website. First of all, capitalisation is overused – “...., **M**ake sure you take...”, **R**un by a local...named **(S)**ayan who has been doing...”, “Sayan tour is **R**ight next to the bus terminal of **(P)**etkasem Rd...”, “And **N**arrow tidl rivers....through **(K)**kao **(T)**tapu and Tham **(L)**lod caves...”, “During the night season (Nov. through **(A)**apr.) Sayan runs...”, and “Sayan also offers..... in **(K)**koh **(P)**panyee....for on this tour you **G**et the normal 4”. Furthermore, misspellings and wrong words are found – “He goes to Kao Pingkan (James Bond Island) and Kao tapu **beffre** most of the tourists...” (before), “And Narrow **tidl** rivers to some lesser explored cave....” (tidal), “If **our** come to Phangnga...” (you) and “During the **night** season (**Nov. though apr.**)” (high) and (From November to April). Moreover, the absence of the suffix ‘s’ for plural nouns is seen in “Sayan runs two tour(s) each day...” These examples make the text sound broken English but they are creatively constructed for a tourism function.

Figure 9. Tenglish in advertising websites

The screenshot displays the website for Pattaya Sea Adventure. At the top, the logo reads "PATTAYA SEA ADVENTURE" and the main headline is "Pattaya Sea Adventure, Pattaya Must Do" with the subtext "More Than 10,000 Happy Traveler.". A navigation menu includes "Home", "Fun Activities", "Description And Booking", "Photo And VDO", and "Contact Us". Below the menu is a large image of a person relaxing on a beach chair. To the right of the image is a box titled "Why Book With Us" containing a list of benefits: "Save time and money", "value package", "Good environment", "Popular activities", "Perfect beach", "Friendly team work", and "TAT license proof". Below this is a video player showing a scene from the website. At the bottom, a section titled "Fun Activities . Buy 1 tour get all activities!" features four images with labels: "Banana Boat", "Coral Island", "Parachute", and "Sea Walker".

(Pattaya Sea Adventure, 2014)

The most remarkable feature of Tenglish is that the suffixes ‘-s’ and ‘es’ in plural nouns are absent in the following expressions – “More Than 10,000 Happy Traveler(s)” and “The beach(es) here are still good...” Moreover, the missing articles ‘a’ and ‘the’ are apparent in the sentence ‘We are (a) Pattaya island tour provider...at (the) Coral island together” and “Let’s you have fun with (a) Banana boat”. Additionally, the redundant use of the English and Thai nouns – “...at Hard Tawaen Beach” and “Hard Tien Beach” - is due to mistranslation. The Thai word ‘Hard’ is equal to the English item ‘Beach’, so the Thai word must be absent. Besides, the misuse of active and passive verb forms is clearly found in the sentences “We are Pattaya island tour provider who **are combined** fun marine activities and relaxation..” (combines) and “Big various trees **lined** along the white fine sand beach” (are lined), and “These things **cannot easily find** in Pattaya” (cannot be easily found). These are caused by the Thai grammar influence on translating of this text into English.

Tenglish discourses in those advertising websites are simplified with a chunk of two main grammatical strategies of inter-language, namely overgeneralization and omission, as well as transference of Thai writing style in English.

4 Discussion

An analysis of Tenglish in English written texts brings some interesting discussions. Firstly, the remaining Tenglish expressions follow the foundation of the basilectal variety of English (Platt et al, 1984). They are employed by English users in various professions as a linguistic tool for different communicative events in Thailand and overseas in which linguistic constructions fit the weak form of English. Secondly, the most popular Tenglish phrase ‘same-same but different’ according to Kravanja (2011)’s view is obvious in this paper; it is found in three examples from fictional, academic and signage texts, resulting in its uniqueness of the lowest variety of Thai English. Thirdly, some features of Tenglish given by Martin (2012) are also apparent in many instances. The mispronounced item ‘Sprite’ appears in a menu text in the analysis. Further, Thais’ being more familiar with the lateral sound than the retroflex sound is clearly seen in Sukrungruang’s (2010) non-fiction in which a Thai American protagonist pronounces the word ‘straweberly’. Moreover, the mixing of Thai words is mostly found in all text types used in this paper. Fourthly, Kausner-Nathan’s (2004) study is clear that the use of translation with Thai semantic elements is applied in all menus shown, causing the outstanding evidence of Tenglish words and phrases. Finally, what Bennui and Hashim (2014) analyze Thai English fiction works is definitely seen that the Thai characters’ ungrammatical English utterances are created for a linguistic effect on readers who will realize the authentic speech presentations of Thais who are inter-language users of English. These discussions are evident that the features of Tenglish here have been established. Surely they are not equivalent to the term ‘Thai English’ but they belong to a layer of this developing variety of English.

5 Conclusion

The features of Tenglish in English texts support its difference from the terms ‘Thai English’. They also reflect a phenomenon in which Thais employ linguistic strategies for creatively communicating in English though certain idiosyncrasies are emerging. Such linguistic emergence conveys low English proficiency of Thais who use English as a foreign language and express more understandable than correct forms of English. This indicates that Tenglish is embedded in a Thai way of life. Although in the future many Thais will possess higher levels of English ability, a number of those who use Tenglish still come about. This will lead to a full recognition of Thai English.

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Online Resources for Language Learning: University Students' Awareness and Perceptions

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Abstract. This paper studies the awareness and perceptions of online language learning resources among university students in Hong Kong. With the prevalence of online resources, students may manage their language learning on their own. These resources have been expected to supplement regular classroom teaching by providing a wide range of learning materials for students to study at their own pace. The effectiveness of these language resources largely depends on the extent to which they are used by students. This involves at least three questions: 1) To what extent these resources are known and familiar to students? 2) How much experience do they have in using these resources? 3) What is their perception of these resources?

A preliminary survey was conducted to investigate the familiarity of around 120 university students in Hong Kong with online language learning resources, as well as their experience and perception on these resources. The results show that most students have an adequate familiarity with such resources. Social networking sites and audio/video channels are the resources most commonly used for this purpose. Rather than having an interest in using these resources and in language learning, students tend to be driven by their need of completing the tasks in their courses. It is also found that the attitude to online resources is a significant factor leading to students' use of the resources. These findings suggest that students may need further institutional and instructional support to develop autonomy in the use of online resources for language learning.

Keywords: online resources, language learning, awareness, perception

1 Introduction

The snowballing development of online resources has changed the landscape of language learning. Available online resources have provided language learners with vast quantities of materials for their diverse learning needs, and enabled them to manage their learning progress on their own. It has been regarded as a shift from “teacher-centred approaches towards a personalised, small-group orientated, multi-dimensional model” of learning (Sun, 2011, p. 428) which is “more personal, social and participatory” (McLoughlin & Lee, 2010, p. 28).

Online language learning resources broadly refer to materials on the Internet which can be used for language learning purposes. Some common types may include instructional materials (e.g. textbooks and exercises), reference materials (e.g.

dictionaries and grammar references), mass media (e.g. newspapers and video channels) and social networking sites. These resources may be delivered in any form through websites or mobile apps, and can be downloaded and accessed offline. They may be the required or optional/reference materials for a course, or materials collected by students for their own study.

Hong Kong students possess high technological readiness for searching and using online resources to facilitate their learning. The territory has a well-developed communication network infrastructure and the highest mobile penetration rate in the world.¹ Students' awareness and competence in the use of information and communication technologies are comparable to other leading countries (Education Bureau, 2012).

The favourable conditions for the use of online resources pose questions concerning the extent to which these resources are exploited by Hong Kong students for language learning and the factors affecting their use. This paper presents a preliminary study of university students' familiarity, experience and perception of the resources available.

2 Related Studies

Relevant studies have been conducted to investigate the use of different types of online resources for language learning. For example, Dixon and Hondo (2014) examined the potential of open educational resources for online language courses. Clark and Gruba (2010) observed that social networking sites provide a social-cultural context of interaction for language learning. Qian and McCormick (2014) found that online forums are supportive resources for language students. These studies have also shown an overall positive attitude of students to the online resources.

The availability of resources, however, does not necessarily lead to students' proper use of them. Simon and Fell (2012) found that, although around 70% of language students from University of Colorado Boulder owned a smartphone, the students did not fully realise the potential of mobile devices for language learning. Zamaria, Adnana, Idrisa, and Yusof (2012) suggested that students need to improve their literacy skills for choosing the right language learning materials.

Previous studies have not provided a clear picture of the use of online language learning resources in Hong Kong. There is relevant research showing that open educational resources have been only limitedly used by university students largely because of their reluctance and ambivalence towards the resources (Li & Wong, 2014), and by university teachers partly due to the considerable time and effort required to locate quality resources (Li, Yuen, & Cheung, 2013; Yuen & Wong, 2013). Yan, Au, Chan, and Tsang (2013) discussed the cultural barriers of Hong Kong students to using educational resources, and opined that they tend to be "teacher-centred" and "examination-oriented". Students may show little intent to access the resources if using the resources is not a course requirement and does not benefit their assessment directly.

¹ According to the latest government data from the Office of the Communications Authority in January 2015, Hong Kong has more than 30,000 public Wi-Fi access points, a 238.4% mobile penetration rate, and 73.9% of mobile users connecting to data networks.

It is uncertain, therefore, the extent to which and how the substantial amount of online language resources have been exploited by the students.

It is thus reasonable to enquire of students in Hong Kong to learn more about their use of online resources for language learning. A preliminary study is outlined below for this purpose.

3 Study Design

This study concerns the awareness and perceptions of university students on online language resources. Through a survey, this study aims to (1) examine students' familiarity and experience with the available online language learning resources; and (2) gauge their perceptions on the use of these resources.

This study follows the theoretical framework developed in Lai, Wang, and Lei (2012), which conceptualises the factors that may affect Hong Kong students' adoption of technology for learning. It is based on two well-grounded theories, the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1985), that have been widely applied to explain acceptance of technology among teachers and students (McGill & Klobas, 2009; Šumak, Polančič, & Heričko, 2010; Teo & Schaik, 2012), while taking into account the particularities of the educational contexts in Hong Kong.

There are three constructs in the framework, namely attitude, educational compatibility and facilitating conditions, which have been found to significantly affect students' decision-making on adoption of technology for learning. Attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative feelings about the use of online resources for language learning. Educational compatibility is defined as the extent to which the use of online language learning resources is compatible with students' learning style, learning needs and beliefs about learning. Facilitating conditions refer to the perceived availability of support in using online resources for language learning from peers and teachers.

The subjects of the study were 121 undergraduate students from a university in Hong Kong, in a broad range of disciplines such as business management, psychology, language studies and nursing. Around 50% of them were Year 1 students, 19% Year 2, 23% Year 3, and 8% Year 4.

The questionnaire was adopted from Lai et al. (2012). In it, there were 15 items rating the students' perceptions about the use of online resources for language learning, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Modifications were made by rewording items to suit the context of the study, and adding items to cover students' familiarity with and experience in online language resources. The questionnaire was administrated in paper-and-pencil format, with the help of two assistants who explained the study to the students and resolved any difficulties they encountered in completing the questionnaire.

4 Results

4.1 Familiarity with and Experience in Online Resources for Language Learning

Findings of the study are reported in two sections. This first section covers the findings regarding the students' familiarity with and experience in online resources for language learning. A majority of the students have a certain degree of familiarity with the resources. As shown in Fig. 1, around half of the students are somewhat familiar with the resources, and about 20% are very familiar with them.

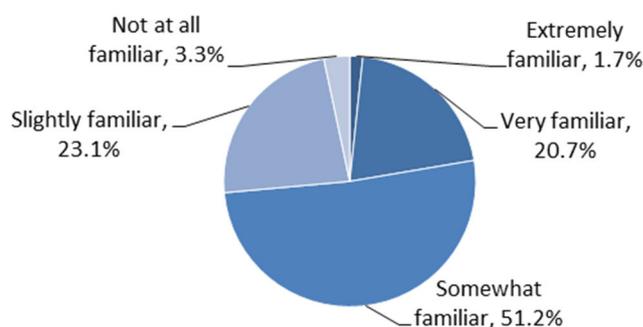


Fig. 1. Students' familiarity with online resources for language learning

Table 1 presents the students' experience, in terms of the number of hours per week, in the use of some common types of online resources. The students tend to dwell relatively longer time on audio/video channels and social network sites, with around 21% and 27% of them spending 3 to 6 hours per week on these resources, respectively. It is, however, less common for them to study online language courses (i.e., around 41% of the students spent less than half an hour per week and 17% never studied them) or read ebooks related to language study (i.e. around 36% spent less than half an hour per week and 19% never read them).

Table 1. Number of hours per week students spent on online resources for language learning (percentage)

	6+ hours	3–6 hours	1–3 hours	0.5–1 hour	≤0.5 hour	Never
Dictionaries	2.5	9.9	25.6	20.7	33.9	7.4
Language courses	0	3.3	20.7	18.2	41.3	16.5
ebooks	0	9.9	14.9	20.7	35.5	19.0
Audio/video channels	13.2	20.7	33.9	13.2	12.4	5.8
Social networking sites	16.5	27.3	20.7	20.7	10.7	4.1
Discussion forums	5.0	12.4	20.7	24.8	24.8	12.4

Table 2 shows the examples of online resources provided by the students that they use most frequently for language learning. It is notable that the resources span a wide range of categories, covering the popular online dictionaries (e.g. Dictionary.com), video channels (e.g. YouTube), and social network sites (e.g. Facebook). Some students also use mobile apps (e.g. Grammar Expert) and online language courses (e.g. MIT OpenCourseWare) for language learning.

Table 2. Examples of online resources used by students for language learning

Types of online resources	Examples
Dictionaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yahoo Dictionary • Cambridge Online Dictionary • Dictionary.com
Grammar reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammar Expert (mobile app) • Spanish grammar by Collins (mobile app)
Language courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIT OpenCourseWare
Audio/video channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YouTube • TED • BBC Learning English
Social networking sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Flipboard
News media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South China Morning Post • Wall Street Journal

Fig. 2 illustrates the areas of language learning in which online resources are used. Vocabulary is the most common area, followed by listening and reading. These areas to some extent reflect the students' popular use of online dictionaries, audio/video channels and social networking sites.

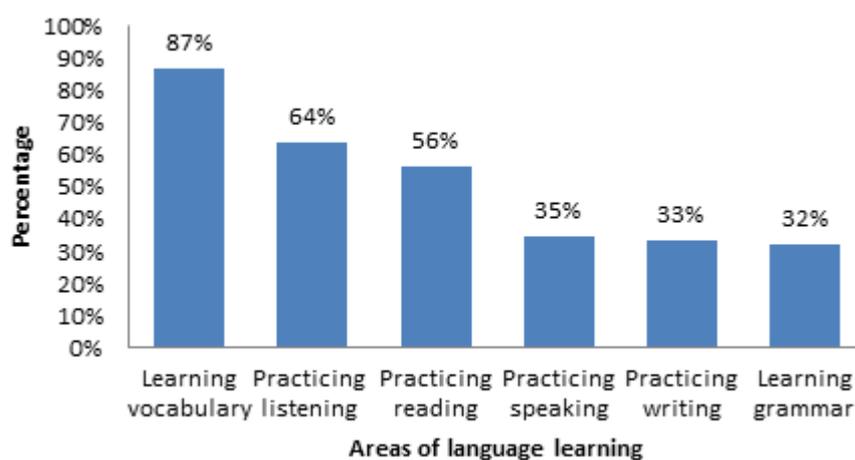


Fig. 2. Areas of language learning in which online resources are used

Table 3 reports the languages learnt by the students with the aid of online resources, and their proficiency level in the languages. English is the most popular language to learn, where more than half of the students rate themselves to be at an intermediate level. Some students also use online resources for learning other languages such as Japanese and Korean, though most of these students are at the beginner level.

Table 3. Students' proficiency level in the languages (percentage)

	Native/near-native	Advanced	Intermediate	Elementary	Beginner
English (N=88)	1.1	22.7	55.7	12.5	8.0
Chinese (N=17)	17.6	23.5	41.2	5.9	11.8
Japanese (N=9)	0	0	11.1	22.2	66.7
Korean (N=7)	0	0	14.3	28.6	57.1
Spanish (N=2)	0	0	0	0	100
German (N=1)	0	0	0	0	100

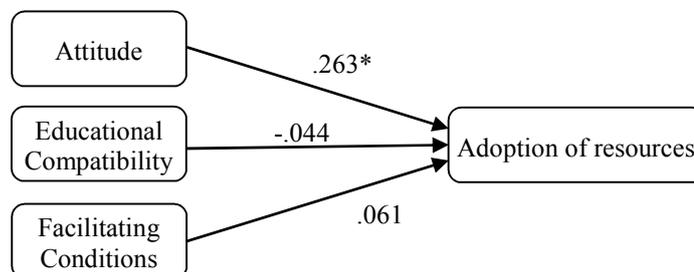
4.2 Factors Affecting the Use of Online Resources

This section presents the factors affecting the students' use of online resources. Table 4 lists a number of reasons for using the online resources. It is apparent that most students use the resources for studying their courses, with nearly 69% of them trying to seek information for assignments, and around half of them to prepare for quizzes or exams. Around 23% indicated that the use of online resources is a compulsory requirement of their courses.

Table 4. Reasons for using the online resources

	Percentage
To get information for assignments	68.6
To prepare for quiz or exam	51.7
To be able to read or listen in that language for entertainment	34.7
Because I like learning that language	27.1
A compulsory requirement of my course	22.9
For my career development	17.8
To extend my social network with foreigners	16.9
To go abroad	8.5
Because my family speaks that language	3.4

Fig. 3 shows the results of multiple regression analysis to examine whether the different factors in the theoretical framework affect the students' adoption of online resources for language learning. For the three factors, only the students' attitude ($\beta=.263, p <.05$) significantly predicts their use of the resources.



*. Standardized Coefficient is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Fig. 3. Standardized coefficients of the factors on adoption of online resources

5 Discussion

The findings of this study outline the present situation regarding university students' use of online resources for language learning. These students typically possess a certain degree of familiarity with and experience in online resources, and are able to access a broad range of resources for different areas of language learning.

For a high proportion of the students, however, their use of the resources tends to be driven by the tasks of their course, such as completing assignments or preparing for quizzes, rather than learning a language for their own interest. Similar findings were also obtained in relevant studies, where students did not perceive the benefits of, nor take the initiatives in, autonomous language learning (Pérez-Sabater, 2012; Üstünlüoğlu, 2009).

Students' attitude to using the resources is the only significant factor leading to their adoption of these resources. The use does not seem to largely match the students' learning needs and beliefs about learning (educational compatibility). There appears to be also a lack of support from peers/teachers in the use of resources (facilitating conditions). Educational compatibility and facilitating conditions were regarded as having a close relationship with each other (Lai et al., 2012), as influence of peers or teachers may also change students' beliefs about learning and learning style.

Given that course requirements are a major factor driving students to use specific kind of resources, relevant institutional and instructional support may be provided to facilitate students to effectively use them. The support may include assistance, guidance or training for the search, selection and use of appropriate online resources (Simon & Fell, 2012; Zamaria et al., 2012). Conroy (2010) showed that, given adequate support, students will become "enthusiastic and reasonably competent users of Internet-based tools and techniques for independent language learning" (p. 861).

6 Conclusion

This paper has presented a preliminary study offering a general picture of university students' use of online resources for language learning. Being a group of techno-savvy digital natives, university students in Hong Kong in general possess the knowledge and skills to use diverse types of online resources. However, their use of the resources tends to be passively responding to the need of completing the tasks of their courses, rather than managing their own language learning autonomously. It is in question, therefore, whether students may be able to fully benefit from using the resources.

Given that a huge amount of online materials are freely available for students to utilise, it would be a great pity and potentially a substantial loss for the students if they fail to properly benefit from these resources which are still growing fast in quantity. The findings that educational compatibility and facilitating conditions are not significant to the use of the resources suggest that availability is not a key factor for usage.

These findings suggest that institutional and instructional support may be offered to develop students' capability and autonomy in searching, selecting and using suitable online resources for their study. It also deserves further studies on whether students' attitude is the major factor affecting their use of resources. Relevant studies have suggested that students' attitude may be influenced by other factors such as individualisation, collaboration, authenticity (Viberg & Grönlund, 2013). Discovery of additional factors relevant to adoption of online materials and the inter-relationship among the factors will help devise proper institutional and instructional support for students on the use of online resources. This paper calls for further studies on how students may be motivated to properly use the resources and what factors are involved.

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The Problem of Reference: From a Nagelian Point of View

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Abstract. How can referring terms, i.e. proper names, natural kind terms and definite descriptions, refer to objects in the world? Different philosophers have provided different and conflicting views concerning the nature of reference, which can be grouped basically into two main camps: the description theorists and the direct reference theorists. In this paper, I am going to attempt a Nagelian reconstruction of the problem of reference by interpreting how it arises from the clash of the subjective and objective point of views of human agents as competent language users. I am going to show that the Nagelian theory of reference I propose helps illuminate the nature of the debate of the two dominant theories.

Keywords: descriptivism, direct reference theory, Kripke, Nagel, philosophy of language, reference

1 Introduction

One of the most fundamental functions of language is to talk about things in the world, which renders a specific kind of words, namely the referring terms, a special status. Referring terms are words that are used to refer to objects in the world, which basically include *proper names* (e.g. “David Hume”, “Hong Kong”) , *natural kind terms* (e.g. “zebra”, “water”) and *definite descriptions* (e.g. “the man reading the book”, “the animals which have black and white stripes on their bodies” and “the transparent liquid which people drink”). Being some articulations of sounds or written marks, the problem is how they can refer to objects in the world. That is, how can the marks “the little creature playing with the pompon” and “Kitty” refer to my pet cat Kitty and “cat” the kind of animal cat? Do they refer to objects in the world in the same manner? How do these referring terms contribute to the content of sentences containing them?

Regarding the nature of reference, opinions can be grouped basically into two main camps: the *description theorists* and the *direct reference theorists*. In this paper, instead of providing a philosophical theory about the nature of reference, I am going to examine the nature of the problem of the nature of reference. I shall attempt a Nagelian reconstruction of the problem by interpreting how it arises from the clash of the subjective and objective point of views of human agents as competent language users. I will first give a brief account of Nagel’s conception of philosophical problems in the

next section. Then, I will attempt a Nagelian account for the nature and origin of the problem of reference and examine the debate between the description theorists and the direct reference theorists in its light in section 3 and 4 respectively. Finally, I will conclude by discussing certain implication of such an account.

2 Nagel's Conception of Philosophy

2.1 The Subjective-Objective Structure of Human Subjects

According to Nagel (1979), a human subject is essentially characterized by his capability of viewing the world from, besides his specific subjective viewpoint, a more detached and objective point of view. Call this capacity the *reflective capacity of objective detachment* and the resulting structure of its manifestation in each particular human subject its *subjective-objective structure*.

The *subjective-objective structure* indicates that we are *finite* beings endowed with a *power of transcending our own finitude*. Each of the human subjects is a finite being essential located in a particular place in the world with his specific perception and conception, whose nature is to a large extent shaped by his specific conditions that are not determined by him. Yet, this same finite human subject is capable of viewing the world and himself reflectively from a more objective point of view, taking himself and the pre-conditions contributing to his current mode of view and existence into consideration. Such a capability does render our pursuit of truth about the reality and morality possible, in that it creates for us a gap between what *appears* to us to be the case and what is *really* the case, and what we *are* and what we *can be* or *should be*. In other word, our reflective capacity allows us to leave and transcend our current specific perspective.

Despite that, there is no guarantee — sometimes it even creates the illusion that there is — that we can find out the truth about what is real and what we should do. *Inter alia*, the capacity cannot guarantee that the capacity itself is either sufficient or even appropriate in arriving at the true and adequate view of every single aspect of the world and ourselves, given the fact that it is only a capacity of a finite being, depending on and deriving from a number of accidental pre-conditions. On the one hand, even if the view from nowhere is the complete view of reality as a whole, we are doomed incapable of obtaining this view as a finite subject. On the other hand, such an absolutely objective view can at best be partial, since various aspects of the human *subjects* resist being fully captured in it.

2.2 The Source of Philosophical Problems

Accordingly, most, if not all, major traditional philosophical problems are rooted in the subjective-objective structure of reflective human subject and faced by “every creature with the impulse and the capacity to transcend its particular point of view and to conceive of the world as a whole” (Nagel, 1986, p.3). Our understanding of the

world and ourselves, concerning what there is and what we should do, begins with our immediate pre-reflective view. To achieve a true understanding of the world, however, we naturally regard our personal and subjective viewpoints as distorting and try to form a view that is as detached and objective as possible. Such an advance in objectivity is proved to be a huge success in physical science, which has the physical world (or the physical aspects of the world) as its object.

While we can understand the same object from two viewpoints of different levels of objectivity, forming two different views, it does not mean that the two views are necessarily conflicting. It may be the case that we employ objective detachment in order to understand the objective aspect of the world, and supplement it by subjective imagination, which aims at making sense of the content of the view as an appearance. Accordingly, if detachment can take all objective facts into account and imagination can specify the content of all subjective facts, they together should form a comprehensive and unified conception of the world as it is.

However, a conflict between our subjective and objective point of view occurs when our understanding turns back to ourselves and try to form a unified conception of ourselves (or of the world including ourselves). As in the case of objective facts, how we appear to ourselves may be distorted by the particularity of our viewpoint and hence may not represent our real nature. Our awareness of this possibility demands us to reflect further to achieve an undistorted view of ourselves by further objective detachment, leaving as much particularity and hence bias and prejudice as possible. Given our aim of understanding the real nature of ourselves and we are just part of the objective world, such a demand seems perfectly reasonable. Accordingly, it seems that we should accept an objective view of ourselves as the only real picture.

However, things do not go so smoothly this time. While some of the most essential features—mind, freedom, language, meaning of life, values and our rational nature itself—of reflective beings are unaccountable in objective terms, they claim to be more than just appearance and constitute part of the reality, and it is at this point the two viewpoints clash. The stalemate lies in the contradiction between two equally undeniable facts. On the one hand, there is subjective reality which can only be understood subjectively. If we try to understand a subjective fact from the absolutely objective viewpoint, i.e. the view from nowhere, we are doomed to leave out what we want to understand. It means that while subjective reality must be acknowledged from the absolutely objective viewpoint, we can never specify its specific qualities without taking up the viewpoint. In this sense, due to the subjective nature of the object of understanding, the subjective viewpoint claims dominance over the objective one.

On the other hand, the subjective view is, however, undermined by the insistence of a more objective one to claim dominance over it even if the fact that subjective facts should be understood subjectively is acknowledged. The fact that any exhaustive understanding of the real nature of subjective facts is subjective does not rule out the aforementioned possibility that what is revealed to a particular viewpoint may merely be appearance and not something real. Besides subjective facts, there are also subjective illusions, and there is no guarantee that what we understand is true and represents the world as it is, unless it can be established from a more objective viewpoint.

Here, we can see how the conflict between the subjective and the objective arises and why it is so difficult to resolve. It arises in our attempt to understand the real nature

of subjective reality. On the one hand, while the objective view is the correct view about what there really is, all it can achieve is at most the acknowledgment of the existence of subjective facts and it fails to provide any adequate account for them. On the other hand, while the subjective viewpoint is more appropriate in understanding subjective facts, it cannot guarantee what is revealed to it about itself is real and not illusive. However, it cannot accept the verdict that what is revealed to it, especially some features we consider to be central and essential to reflecting beings, is mere appearance either. They come to a total deadlock because both of them claim dominance over but are persistently rejected by the other.

Such a conflict, Nagel argues, underlines all philosophical problems: the problem of free will, the meaning of life, our attitudes towards death, the existence and nature of value, ethics, political theory, knowledge and language all have the same underlying structure. Pre-reflectively, we take ourselves to be beings with certain characteristics. On reflection, some of them turn out to be mere illusions, representing only what we appear to ourselves to be and not what we really are. To obtain a more secured conception of ourselves, we detach more and more from our particularity so that distortion may be eliminated as far as possible. Such detachment, if practised relentlessly, may not always yield a result, since what we want to understand is the nature of reflective beings, who are essentially beings with their specific points of view. At some point, the subjective view pulls back and resists a more objective one, but we do not know where to stop. While we can reasonably assume that most, if not all, of the our features (meaning of life, values, freedom, concern about our death, skepticism toward our own attitudes and beliefs, etc.) are, if they are real at all, essentially related to the particularity of our viewpoints to different degrees, we can only obtain different conflicting views about them. Therefore, no unified conception of reality is likely to be achieved and the intemperate appetite for such a conception generates all those unacceptable reductionist theories of the world and ourselves.

In the next section, I will first give a brief account of the problem concerning the nature of reference in the light of the Nagelian framework outlined above.

3 A Nagelian Account of the Problem of Reference

3.1 The Problem

It is part of our most ordinary life that we always use different words to refer to objects in the world and communicate our thoughts about different objects with other people. According to our everyday experience, it seems quite obvious that I can use a referring term, which can be a *proper name*, a *natural kind term* or a *definite description*, to refer to a particular object or a kind of object and express my thought about them with sentences containing the term to other speakers in my linguistic community, and I can understand what they are talking about when they do so.

Sometimes, however, there may be communication breakdown, which is quite common in our everyday life. Consider the following conversation between me and my friend Danny:

Roger: Marsalis is really great in *Father Time*!

- Danny: Yes! I've watched that video on Youtube too. Marsalis always plays with supreme technique.
- Roger: Sure! And his solo there is as innovative as ever.
- Danny: You think so? But he barely solos in that song.....just a few notes at the end.
- Roger: What are you talking about? The song is mostly *his* solo!
- Danny: Wait.....Oh.....you are talking about *Branford* Marsalis!! I thought you were talking about *Wynton*.....
- Roger: What? How would any *real* jazz fans like Wynton Marsalis!?!?!?!!

A case like this makes me pause and stand back from my everyday linguistic practice and wonder whether I and my conversation partner are really talking about the same thing when I think I am engaging in a smooth and successful conversation with them. Once such a possibility is open, nothing stops the landslide of doubt. Do I really talk about what I think I talk about when I use any referring terms in expressing my thought? Worse still, can I really refer to anything in the world with the so-called referring terms I use at all? To ease my doubt and ensure I am using these terms as I think, I am prompted to find an explanation for the fact that I can use a referring term *R* to refer to an object *x* or a kind of object *k*, which can adequately spell out the respective nature of me as a competent language user, those terms and their relation to the objects in the world. I need to find some facts other than, underlying and justifying my personal belief in my referring to *x* by *N*. In other words, instead of taking my subjective impression for granted, I try to articulate a reflective account of *reference*, i.e. the phenomenon of *speakers using referring terms to refer to objects in the world*, or simply *S-using-R-to-refer-to-x*.

3.2 The Magical Theory of Reference

As long as the problem is that my pre-reflective impression is not reliable, it seems reasonable to think that an objective account should be able to do the job perfectly well. Accordingly, I am looking for some objective facts that can adequately explain reference. An ideal explanation should hence be one which explains the possibility and mechanism of reference by appealing to facts that are not essentially derived from any particular point of view of the speaker.

The usual answer instantly pops up in one's mind once this question emerges may be that the words as such objectively possesses some kind of intrinsic properties that link it to the objects they refer to. I can use the word "cat" to refer to cats because it has some unique intrinsic properties not possessed by other non-coreferring words which relate it to cats in the world. One attractive feature of such a view is precisely that it appeals only to some objective properties of linguistic terms and no subjective facts about the speakers at all in accounting for their reference.

This can be formulated as a version of "magical theory of reference", which is highly implausible.¹ First of all, it is quite obscure what is meant by "words as such".

¹ The term is introduced in Putnam (1981). Generally speaking, the theory consists of two main claims: 1) certain objects, mental or physical, are intrinsically representations of something

Literally speaking, it means words taken out of their communicative contexts and, especially, totally detached from their users' subjective points of view – their thoughts, beliefs and intentions. In other words, it can only mean certain sets of sound articulations or mark arrangements. As long as we only focus on their purely physical aspects, no matter how detailed the description about such sounds and marks is, nothing that can enable us to differentiate them from other non-linguistic sounds and marks can be identified. “Cat” written on a sheet of paper and black lines on a pavement left behind by a bicycle *as such* are simply two different sets of configuration of marks and no differences between them are sufficient to enable us to identify one of them as a *word* at the first place.

The chief problem with this view is that a word, as long as it is a word, cannot be understood independently from the intentions of the actual or at least potential *users*. Language is a tool like a screwdriver, which, *as a tool*, is more than a physical object composed of a piece of plastic and a steel rod with a flat head. Sounds and marks are linguistic expressions only if they are used as ones, and the fact that they are used as tools intrinsically involves their users. If the so called “intrinsic” properties of a word are understood as something independent of the users, there can simply be no such properties that can explain the phenomenon of reference. There is no intrinsic connection between a word as such and the object it represents or refers to. *R* is basically my tool to express my thought about *x*, and the explanation about how it can refer to *x* must be founded on certain facts concerning how *I* the users can think about and talk about *x*.

3.3 The Scientific Account of Reference

The failure of the magical theory of reference shows that no plausible account of reference can be given without taking the users' intentions and purposes into account at least in some way. Can we, then, give an objective account which takes the users into consideration? One ready candidate is, as always, a scientific account with physics as its paradigm, which claims and is supposed to describe the reality from a point of view detached, at least, from all sentient beings. Such an account can only appeal to externally observable elements. At the extreme, we are aiming for some purely neurological or behavioristic account of human linguistic behaviours, in which the users' intentions are understood and explained reductively in terms of the neurological processes in their brains and/or the behavioral patterns and regularities displayed involved in their act of referring.

Such a scientific account, however, is highly implausible. Acknowledging the reality of the phenomenon of reference, it still necessarily denies any essentially subjective aspects of the phenomenon of reference, and spoken words are *merely* articulated sounds uttered by humans accompanied with some kind of sophisticated physiological and behavioral regularities. No matter how detailed the specification of the pre-conditions goes, this is always compatible with a situation where the sound

else and 2) there is a necessary connection between representations, mental or physical, and what they represent. Though I share his rejection of the theory, I do not agree with his ascription of the antisceptical implication of such rejection.

producer does not *intend* to say or refer to anything with his sounds at all. Even in the most typical case where two people pointing at the same object x produce the same sound (with the same articulation, frequency and volume, so to speak), all we can say is at most that under certain externally determinable conditions, they both point at x and produce the same sound. Yet, we do not have sufficient ground to say that they are both *referring* to x with that sound.

Though the scientific account mentioned above does incorporate the language users into the picture, they are merely treated as another kind of physical system without taking their subjective aspects like thought, beliefs and intentions in their own right. Now, what the scientific account offers may seem acceptable and even plausible if it is an account of the quasi-linguistic behaviours of non-human animals, or even, perhaps, the linguistic behaviours of people other than me. This, however, cannot represent the true and complete story about *me*. For me, the fact that I use R to refer to x , if it is possible, essentially involves some subjective elements, e.g. my ability to grasp and understand x and my intention to talk about x , which have to be considered from my subjective point of view. A purely physiological and behavioristic account of *my* act of referring without appealing to these facts (or having them reduced to something purely physiological and behavioristic) is just like giving a purely physiological and behavioristic account of my writing of a poem — the physical and chemical processes occurring in my brain, the external stimuli I have received from my surrounding, the movement of the pen held in my hand, the physical allocation of the marks on the sheet of paper — without mentioning how I perceive and understand the world I want to write about and the words I use to write, i.e. it is simply not describing *my writing of a poem*. Accordingly, the scientific account, both the neurological and behavioristic version, either 1) ignores some essential subjective aspects of my referring, or even 2) explains my act of referring away and leave no room for it in its worldview at all, or 3) talks simply about something irrelevant to the issue. Despite the fact that it may indeed supply us with useful information about the objective aspects of the phenomenon, it as such is simply not an account of *my referring* at all. What is true about me is true to all speakers from their subjective points of view.

3.4 A Nagelian Conception of the Problem of Reference

We can now see in what sense our thought about the nature of reference involve the Nagelian dilemma. To begin with, every competent language users seem to be capable of employing some referring terms to talk about things in the world. However, our reflective capacity of objective detachment enables us to discover that our initial pre-reflective impression about what and how we are doing in using a referring term R to refer to an object x , like that about any other everyday beliefs we have, may be blinded by our ignorance of the nature of our subjective constitution and is hence prone to errors and misunderstandings. Therefore, the only possible way to achieve a better and more accurate view is to elevate above our initial position and formulate a more objective view about it. The natural ideal of such a project is to achieve an absolutely objective view (or at least a scientific view) which is totally detached and free from any kinds of subjective elements of any particular points of view.

Reasonable as it seems, our subjective viewpoint, from which we understand and conduct our life as finite rational thinkers, agents and, in this case, language users, resists such a picture. Not only that the subjective aspects like thought, beliefs and intentions of the language users should be taken into account, but they should be taken properly in their own right. An account of the linguistic act of referring without taking such subjective features and elements of the language users into account in their own right is anything but an adequate account of reference.

While the subjective elements should not be ignored, it does not mean that we can merely stick to our pre-reflective view about our referring behaviours. Given the possibility of subjective illusions, an adequate explanation of the real nature of reference needs to be provided and endorsed from a more objective standpoint in one way or another. Here, like other philosophical problems, there is a clash between the subjective and the objective viewpoint that no easy solution is guaranteed.

4 The Debate Revisited

I think the Nagelian understanding of the nature of the problem of reference above sheds new light on the heated debate between the *description theory* represented by Russell, Frege, Searle and Frank Jackson on the one hand, and the *direct reference theory* advocated by Kripke, Putnam, Donnellan, which revives and reinforces the Millian view about names and natural kind terms on the other.

4.1 The Description Theory

Acknowledging the reality of the phenomenon of reference, i.e. *S-using-R-to-refer-to-x*, description theory and direct reference theory differ in their views about the nature of referring terms and how *S* refers to *x* with *R*. Description theory endorses the view that all referring terms are basically the same, namely that they are all definite descriptions (*D*). Natural kind terms and proper names (*N*) are only abbreviated or “disguised” definite descriptions, which means:

- 1) Each natural kind term and proper name *N* has a meaning or sense, which is a certain definite description *D*, which describes a particular kind of object *k* or a particular individual object *x* as something having a certain property *p*.²

And/or

- 2) *S* is able to use *N* to refer to *k* or *x* because it is defined as or at least associated with *D* which specifies *p* through which *k* or *x* is identified. In other words, *D* is the necessary and/or the sufficient condition for identifying the referent of *N*, i.e. *k* or *x*.³

² While natural kind terms and proper names are different in a number of ways, the same symbol “*N*” is used to stand for both of them since their differences are not relevant to the debate between the descriptionists and the direct theorists.

³ As long as one holds that a definite description always plays an essential role in the fact that a natural kind term or a name refers to its referent, he can be considered as a descriptionist.

The basic motivation behind this descriptionist picture is the idea that if S is able to use N to refer to x or k , he has to be able to grasp x or k in some way. S must be able to identify x or k , which, according to the descriptionists, can only be done if S has a clear conception of what x or k is. A clear conception of x or k must at least consist of a description of some property p uniquely possessed by x or k which enables S to identify x or k . It just seems so obvious that if S is able to use N to refer to x or k , it is simply impossible for S to know *nothing*, i.e. not even a single definite description, about x or k . Therefore, there must be some kind of necessary connection between N and D or p . In sum, if S can use N to refer to x or k , S must have a clear conception of x , which essentially involved x or k described as something possessing p , i.e. D , and hence we can say that N means D , and/or N refers to x or k in virtue of D .

4.2 The Direct Reference Theory

The descriptionists stress that S can use N to refer to x or k only if S can associate a definite description D to x or k , a point against which the direct theorists launch a powerful attack. According to Soames (2010), Kripke advances three arguments against the description theory in his *Naming and Necessity*, namely the *modal argument*, the *epistemic argument* and the *semantic argument*. Here, I am not going to rehearse the details of or assess the soundness of the three arguments. Yet, I will attempt an interpretation of what these arguments are really about.

In challenging the description theorists, Kripke argues that names and natural kind terms behave differently from definite descriptions in various aspects. If we do not distinguish the two different modes of referring and hence the two different kinds of referring terms, a lot of common linguistic phenomena will become incomprehensible.

One of the central questions is what should be the appropriate criterion for such a distinction. In his modal argument, Kripke tries to draw the distinction according to the distinct modal characteristics of D and N . While most, if not all, names and natural kinds are rigid designators, which always refer to the same objects in all possible worlds where they exist, definite descriptions are non-rigid designators, which refer to different objects fitting the descriptions, i.e. possessing the described properties, in different possible worlds where they exist. Since rigid designators and non-rigid designators are mutually exclusive in that they refer to their objects in distinct manner, names and natural kind terms cannot be identified as definite description. (Kripke, 1980, pp.44-49)

The second piece of evidence for the distinction between names and natural kind terms and definite descriptions is that if the latter is just a subclass of the former, there will be some very paradoxical consequences. Firstly, if a certain definite description $D1$ is the meaning of a name $N1$ which refers to an object $x1$, then everyone who uses $N1$ to refer to $x1$ must take $N1$ as $D1$. This, however, clearly does not match our everyday experience, since it is possible that two different speakers $S1$ and $S2$, both using $N1$, associate different properties $p1$ and $p2$ to $x1$ in identifying it. Accordingly,

There can be different versions of description theory, depending on whether the description is taken as the semantic content or merely a reference fixing mechanism, whether it is taken as necessary or sufficient or both, etc.. For a clearer idea of how description theory can be understood in different terms, see Frederick Kroon (2007).

their associated descriptions of $x1$ are now $D1$ and $D2$ respectively, but it gives rise to nothing problematic concerning their using the same name $N1$ to refer to the same object $x1$ at all. Secondly, the fact that $S1$ fails to specify any description of any associated properties of $x1$, or even that $S1$ associates only false descriptions, says $D3$ which does not truly describe $x1$ at all, to $x1$, is compatible with the fact that $S1$ manages to use $N1$ to refer to $x1$. (Kripke, 1980, pp.78-85)

The third reason for the distinction lies in a very bizarre epistemological consequence of taking names and natural kind terms as a kind of definite description. Suppose $S2$ uses a natural kind term $N2$ to refer to a natural kind $k2$, whose members are believed by $S2$ to possess the properties $p2$. Following the description theorists, $N2$ means or possesses a sense given by the description “the kind of things which possesses $p2$ ” (call this description $D2$). Obviously, we can know *a priori* that $N2$ is $N2$, but knowing that $N2$ is the kind of things which possess $p2$ normally involves empirical discovery which we can only know *a posteriori*. It follows that $N2$ cannot mean $D2$. (Kripke, 1980, pp.86-87)

The basic idea underlying these anti-descriptionist arguments, in my opinion, is that while S definitely needs to *actually* understand the definite description D and then associate it with x or k in order to use D to talk about the objects or kinds of object it describes, S needs not first understand *any* definite descriptions in order to use N to talk about x or k . In determining whether N refers to x or k or not, what S actually thinks about x or k , according to the direct theorists, is not important at all. Such a difference in turn gives rise to the differences in the modal behaviors, the nature of semantic content and the epistemic status between D and N .

However, how then can S associate N to x at the first place? The direct theorists usually adopt what is now commonly called the causal theory of reference initiated in Kripke’s sketchy picture suggested in *Naming and Necessity*. Accordingly, in order for a non-descriptive referring term $N1$ to refer to an object $x1$ or a kind of object $k1$, there must be first a speaker $S1$ who first coins the name $N1$ and applies it to $x1$ or $k1$. Usually $S1$ has some direct acquaintance with $x1$ or some members of $k1$, with or without any specific description regarding certain properties of $x1$ or those observed members $k1$, which is not essential for the act of naming $x1$ or $k1$ as $N1$ *anyway*. A connection between $N1$ and $x1$ is hence built up and spreads throughout the linguistic community through the conversations among different language users. Apart from the initial namer $S1$, other users can use $N1$ to refer to $x1$ or $k1$ if and only if a causal link can be traced eventually back to $S1$ ’s baptism of $x1$ or $k1$. The very existence of such a causal chain explains and justifies the fact that $N1$ fixes on $x1$ or $k1$, and no appeal to any subjective states of the speakers, including their specific knowledge about $x1$ or $k1$, is required. (Kripke, 1980, pp. 88-97)

5 Conclusion

What can we observe from the debate between the descriptionists and the direct reference theorists? While the descriptionists are right in insisting that a competent language user S —at least one, who is an expert or the original namer—must have some

grasp of x or k in order that S can refer to x or k by N , they are wrong in thinking that such a grasp must be in the form of conceptual or linguistically expressible understanding of x or k . Similarly, while the direct reference theorists are correct in pointing out that S need not first be able to give *any* definite description or possess any conceptual knowledge of x or k in order to use N to talk about x or k , they are wrong in thinking that what S can grasp about x or k is totally irrelevant to his referring to x with N .

In my opinion, when a language user use a name or a natural kind term, what he does is not looking for an object or a kind of object that fits a certain description involving properties he is able to conceive and describe. What he does, instead, is to talk directly about the object. It is true that we always use some definite descriptions to talk about particular objects or kinds of objects in the world, but a definite description always involves and hence presupposes (at least) some non-descriptive referring terms, like “the *man* who is sitting there”, “the father of *Jesus*”, etc.. Indeed, the ability to use a definite description presupposes our mastering of a language to the extent that we have some stock of directly referring terms. If this kind of *direct referring*, which is not mediated by any description of some properties of an object first, is not possible, no description can be articulated at the first place and language in general is impossible. In other words, it shows that the ability of a language user to use a linguistic expression to refer to objects in the world does not presuppose his ability to form a verbal description or even conceptual understanding of the object.

Accordingly, the possibility of names and natural kind terms as non-descriptive referring terms reveals that we have the capability of possessing and using *concepts* to refer to objects in the world without forming clear and well-articulated (or even true) *conceptions* of them. Here, I agree with Putnam that “concepts are.....abilities and not occurrences” (Putnam, 1981, pp. 17-21), and hence having these concepts shows that we humans as competent speakers must have the capability of achieving some kind of pre-linguistic, non-conceptual knowledge, perhaps some kind of intuitive grasp of objects in the world, which enable us to fix on these objects. Since referring is one of the fundamental elements of human language as a communicative system, the existence of language requires us to accept such ability as one of the fundamental facts about human agents.

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How to Know “Dao” through Words? Zhuangzi’s Philosophy of Language

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Abstract. Zhuangzi, an important philosopher who lived around the 4th century BC during the Warring States period of ancient China, seems to advocate radical skepticism and relativism in the eyes of quite a number of renowned scholars. One of them, Chad Hansen for example, famously argues that Zhuangzi defends radical skepticism and espouses a “perspectival relativism” which shows that all discrimination and classification are relative and so there are no standpoints from which anything can be known to be objectively true, especially regarding evaluative judgments. But the present writer disagrees with this kind of interpretations. In this paper, by investigating the philosophy of language of Zhuangzi, mainly within the “Inner Chapters” of the book “Zhuangzi”, the present writer tries to show that Zhuangzi takes a comparatively more affirmative stance towards language rather than his predecessor, Laozi. Although Zhuangzi does deny the objectivity of common forms of knowledge (“small knowledge”), he acknowledges the existence of a greater form of knowledge (“great knowledge”, “true knowledge”, “luminosity”) which is intuitive or even mystical in nature, and hence Zhuangzi does not advance any true skepticism and relativism. And Zhuangzi suggestively assigns a constructive role of language in the attainment of this greater form of knowledge, namely the knowledge of Dao (the “Way”, which is the ultimate Being and Truth in Zhuangzi’s philosophy). In this paper, Zhuangzi’s peculiar understanding of language will be discussed, with emphasis on his view of the paradoxical nature of language: that it can either conceal (producing small knowledge) or unconceal Dao (facilitating our grasp of true knowledge).

Keywords: Zhuangzi, philosophy of language, skepticism, relativism, Dao.

1 Introduction

Zhuangzi (莊子), an important philosopher who lived around the 4th century BC during the Warring States period (戰國時代) of ancient China, seems to advocate radical skepticism and relativism in the eyes of quite a number of renowned scholars. One of them, Chad Hansen for example, famously argues that Zhuangzi defends radical skepticism and espouses a “perspectival relativism” which shows that all discrimination and classification are relative and so there are no standpoints from which anything can be known to be objectively true, especially regarding evaluative judgments. But the

present writer disagrees with this kind of interpretations. In order to make the present writer's point clear, this paper will investigate Zhuangzi's thought on language.

To investigate Zhuangzi's philosophy of language, we should first of all put Zhuangzi's thought back to its historical context. It has been commonly agreed that language theories in ancient China start from an interpretation of the prescriptive role of language – facilitating social contacts and the observation of rules. Confucius (孔子) once famously proposes that a good society should be protected by *zhengming* (正名) – regulating the use of names. And the adequacy of names means observing conventions. Afterwards, stimulated by the Confucians' interest in *zhengming*, the debate on the relationship between *ming* (名, name) and *shi* (實, reality) or *wu* (物, thing) poses a fundamental question: Can names convey the essence of reality?

To this question, the contemporary schools of thought, Confucianism, Mohism, "Daoism"¹, Nominalism, to name the most important ones, give very different answers. The problem is, according to the orthodox view dominated mainstream readings of the texts, Zhuangzi was labeled as the disciple of Laozi who was the founder of philosophical as well as religious "Daoism". Most of the exegeses of Zhuangzi were dominated by this traditional view, understanding Zhuangzi as a loyal disciple tried to explicate and develop the master's thought. Therefore, a good number of scholars share the view that Zhuangzi succeeds Laozi's negative stance towards language.

However, the present writer disagrees with this. In this paper on Zhuangzi's philosophy of language, by the attempt to clarify the relationship between language and "Dao" in Zhuangzi's thought, he will try to show that Zhuangzi takes a comparatively more affirmative stance towards language. Besides, this study may shed a little light on the problem whether we should label Zhuangzi as a "Daoist". In fact, the story of the descending of Daoist inheritance from Laozi to Zhuangzi was constructed more than a century after Zhuangzi's death, in the Han (漢) Dynasty. To quote the words of Wing-tsit Chan, "[...] the name 'Taoist [Daoist] School [道家]' was not used until the first century B.C.," and to group both Laozi and Zhuangzi under the same school of thought "was first mentioned in Ssu-ma Ch'ien's [司馬遷](145-86 B.C.?) autobiography in his *Shih chi* [史記](Records of the Historian)." (Chan 1963:136) Moreover, "although it has been customary to speak of Lao Tzu [Laozi] and Chuang Tzu [Zhuangzi] together as Lao-Chuang, actually the practice did not begin until the fifth century." (Chan 1963: 177-178) Obviously, the "school of Daoism" of Laozi and Zhuangzi is only a retrospective conjecture proposed by literati in the Han Dynasty. This conjecture can be quite problematic and even interfere with our understanding of Zhuangzi. Interestingly, both Laozi and Zhuangzi in their own time did not know they were "Daoists". According to A.C. Graham, there are evidence suggesting Zhuangzi (the writer of the "Inner Chapters") had never seen the text of *Laozi* and probably thought of Lao Dan (老聃) as a Confucian. (Graham 2001) Therefore the present writer would like to look at Zhuangzi's philosophy of language in its own right, apart from any "Daoist" presuppositions.

¹ As the present writer does not agree with the common practice of grouping Laozi and Zhuangzi in a common "school of thought" named "Daoism" (the rationale of which would be clarified in this paper), the word Daoism would be in quotation marks in order to signify the common understanding constructed afterwards, which is not necessarily true.

Although Zhuangzi does deny the objectivity of common forms of knowledge (“small knowledge”), he acknowledges the existence of a greater form of knowledge (“great knowledge”, “true knowledge”, “luminosity”) which is intuitive or even mystical in nature, and hence Zhuangzi does not advance any true skepticism and relativism. And Zhuangzi suggestively assigns a constructive role of language in the attainment of this greater form of knowledge, namely the knowledge of Dao (the “Way”, which is the ultimate Being and Truth in Zhuangzi’s philosophy). In this paper, Zhuangzi’s peculiar understanding of language will be discussed, with emphasis on his view of the paradoxical nature of language: that it can either conceal (producing small knowledge) or unconceal Dao (facilitating our grasp of true knowledge).

According to the dominant view in modern and contemporary scholarship (Graham, 2001: 27), the first 7 chapters of the book *Zhuangzi*, known as the “Inner Chapters (內篇)” while being homogeneous in style and systematic in thought, are primarily written by the historical Zhuangzi himself. The “Outer Chapters (外篇)” and “Miscellaneous Chapters (雜篇)” of *Zhuangzi*, on the other hand, were most likely written by a number of different writers other than Zhuangzi himself, probably by some disciples within the “School of Zhuangzi” or writers more or less influenced by Zhuangzi’s thought. Therefore, as we are examining Zhuangzi’s own philosophy in this paper, our primary focus will be on the “Inner Chapters” although a few very key passages in “Outer Chapters” or “Miscellaneous Chapters” will be discussed where appropriate.

2 What is “Small Knowledge”?

In Chapter 1 of *Zhuangzi*, “Free and Easy Wandering [逍遙遊]”, Zhuangzi said, “Small knowledge is not good enough as great knowledge. [小知不及大知, my translation]” Here Zhuangzi makes an important dichotomy of “small knowledge” and “great knowledge”, and he persistently investigates the differences between them throughout the “Inner Chapters” (although by his writing style he doesn’t necessarily keep the wordings consistent). In order to understand what he means by “small knowledge”, we have to read Chapter 2 of his book, entitled “Discussion on Making All Things Equal [齊物論]”, which is devoted almost entirely to Zhuangzi’s epistemological questions. This Chapter 2 is extremely critical in understanding Zhuangzi’s reflection on knowledge and language. And, interesting to know, almost all scholars who deem Zhuangzi as skepticist or relativist rely their arguments heavily on this chapter. Schwitzgebel makes an accurate observation when he says, “Sometimes, Zhuangzi seems to advocate radical skepticism and relativism. This occurs especially in his second chapter, the ‘Discussion on Making All Things Equal.’” (Schwitzgebel 1996:68)

In the era of “a hundred schools of thought contend (百家爭鳴)”, Zhuangzi wonders about the basis of assertions made by competing theorists, including Confucius and the Confucian school, Mozi and the Mohist school, Laozi, and the Nominalists including his friend Huizi (惠施). All of them promote their theories as a universal and ahistorical antidote to the existing socio-political chaos, and some of them (most

notably Confucians and Mohists) even having an exclusively absolutist and paternalistic attitude towards other points of view. Zhuangzi says in chapter 2:

Tao [Dao] is obscured by petty biases and speech is obscured by flowery expressions. Therefore there have arisen the controversies between the Confucianists and the Moists, each school regarding as right what the other considers as wrong, and regarding as wrong what the other considers as right. (Chapter2, trans. Chan 1963: 182)

Certainly they cannot all be right. In Zhuangzi's opinion, they are all biased and limited by their own perspectives: *chengxin* 成心:

If we follow what is formed in our mind (*chengxin* 成心) as a guide, who will not have such a guide? Not only those who know the succession of day and night and choose them by exercising their own minds have them (opinions). Stupid people have theirs too. To have opinions as to right or wrong before the feelings are produced in the mind [未成乎心] is as mistaken as to say that “one goes to the state of Yueh today and arrives there yesterday.” (Chapter 2, trans. Chan 1963: 182)

Everybody, no matter wise or foolish, has *chengxin* which determines his/her own opinions of right and wrong (是非). But what does *chengxin* mean? Because of the ambiguity of the Chinese characters (which Zhuangzi is fully aware of and playfully make use of) “成心” has 2 literal meanings which complement each other:

1. Nobody can claim he/she is absolutely free of any bias or prejudice. All of us see the world through our own perspectives, which more or less are limited. Moreover, all of our cognition is shaped by our values, knowledge and past experiences. This is the first meaning of *chengxin*, namely, all the things effective in the “background” of our experience and understanding (成見). This is quite similar to the crucial concept of “horizon” in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics.
2. The drive towards completion 求成之心, the desire to take control over things and social behavior, a kind of “will to power”, so to speak. (Mollgaard 2007) This is also immanent in our human nature. We have a desire to take over the world we live in, to make it secure and controllable, to put chaos into format, to regulate and rationalize our actions and our society. This is the second meaning of *Chengxin*.

Zhuangzi thinks that this *chengxin* unfolds quite naturally in our lives, as ontologically speaking we are all finite subjects:

There is nothing that is not the “that” and there is nothing that is not the “this”. Things do not know that they are the “that” of other things; they only know what they themselves know. Therefore I say that the “that” is produced by the “this” and the “this” is also caused by the “that”.

This is the theory of mutual production. [...] Because of the right, there is the wrong, and because of the wrong, there is the right. [...] The “this” is also the “that”. The “that” is also the “this”. The “this” has one standard of right and wrong, and the “that” also has a standard of right and wrong. (Chapter 2, trans. Chan 1963: 182-183)

From my own point of view, I as the subject am the “this 是”, and you as the object are the “that 彼”. I have my point of view, which you do not know; and you have your point of view, which I do not know either. Because of my *chengxin*, I naturally incline to think I am right 是, and you are wrong 非; and in the same way you would think you are right, and I am wrong. Therefore each of us is biased towards our own viewpoint, just forgetting that all possible viewpoints are limited and cannot get the whole truth. Moreover, because of our “will to power” desiring to take charge of the world and make others comply with our judgments (or even dominate and manipulate them), I would try to persuade and justify to the others why I am right. And as all of us, being self-righteous, would justify ourselves, we would fall into unstoppable disputations (*bian* 辯) and tiresome power struggle. Zhuangzi depicts this kind of pathetic life of mundane passions as the life of “small knowledge”:

Joy, anger, grief, delight, worry, regret, fickleness, inflexibility, modesty, willfulness, candor, insolence - music from empty holes, mushrooms springing up in dampness [...] Once a man receives this fixed bodily form, he holds on to it, waiting for the end. Sometimes clashing with things, sometimes bending before them, he runs his course like a galloping steed, and nothing can stop him. Is he not pathetic? Sweating and laboring to the end of his days and never seeing his accomplishment, utterly exhausting himself and never knowing where to look for rest - can you help pitying him? (Chapter 2, trans. Watson 2013: 8-9)

3 The Futility of “Bian”: From the Viewpoint of Language

Even if we are constrained by our *chengxin*, can we still solve the quarrels and struggles of our “small knowledge” by rational argumentation and disputation (*bian* 辯) and get the Truth? To this question, Zhuangzi gives an emphatic “no”:

Suppose you and I argue (*bian*). If you beat me instead of my beating you, are you really right and am I really wrong? If I beat you instead of your beating me, am I really right and are you really wrong? Or are we both partly right and partly wrong? Or are we both wholly right and wholly wrong? Since between us neither you nor I know which is right, others are naturally in the dark. Whom shall we ask to arbitrate? If we ask someone who agrees with you, since he has already agreed with you, how can he arbitrate? If we ask someone who agrees with me, since he has already agreed with me, how can he arbitrate? If we ask someone

who disagrees with both you and me to arbitrate, since he has already disagreed with you and me, how can he arbitrate? If we ask someone who agrees with both you and me to arbitrate, since he has already agreed with you and me, how can he arbitrate? (Chapter 2, trans. Chan 1963:189-190)

Zhuangzi's point here is quite clear: to find a completely impartial judge to arbitrate between confronting viewpoints is simply "mission impossible". But, apart from the above analysis of *chengxin*, this point needs further elaboration and justification. And we find that Zhuangzi does have his elaboration and justification, all of them concerns his reflection on language:

3.1 Language as a Set of Contingent Distinctions

To Zhuangzi, *chengxin* is equip-primordially a linguistic phenomenon. As human beings we speak and listen to words. With language we articulate our thinking and live in a meaningful world. In ours words, we discriminate "this" from "that", "right" from "wrong", "beautiful" from "ugly", etc. Our language, consisting of names (名) we refer to the things in the world, is full of distinctions. However, such naming and distinctions are subjective and also relative because they take place from an individual point of view, that is, our *chengxin*. That means our languages are intrinsically perspectival and contingently dissect the world into small and portable parts. Zhuangzi points out that, names (or words) are artificial and discriminating that they corrupt the reality, the Dao:

What is division 分 [to some] is production 成 [to others], and what is production [to others] is destruction 毀 [to some]. Whether things are produced or destroyed, [Tao] again identifies them all as one 道通為一。
(Chapter 2, trans. Chan 1963:184)

The dissections done by our names surely are productive to us, in the sense that we can have explicit knowledge expressed in the names, for example, "this picture is ugly". But this knowledge reflects our specific conceptual framework which is merely perspectival and not necessarily true. Therefore the division of our names is simultaneously destruction, because:

1. it bars us from seeing the world through other possible perspectives (every language as a set of distinctions reflects a conceptual framework). The world is full of different kinds of lives and beings, the diversity of which simply make it impossible to make any overwhelming universal judgments:

If a man sleeps in a damp place, he will have a pain in his loins and will dry up and die. Is that true of eels? If a man lives up in a tree, he will be frightened and tremble. Is that true of monkeys? Which of the three knows the right place to live? Men eat vegetables and flesh, and deer eat tender grass. Centipedes enjoy snakes, and owls and crows like mice. Which of the four knows the right taste? Monkey mates with the dog-headed female ape and the buck mates with the doe, and eels mate with

fishes. Mao Ch'iang and Li Chi were considered by men to be beauties, but at the sight of them fish plunged deep down in the water, birds soared high up in the air, and deer dashed away. Which of the four knows the right kind of beauty? From my point of view, the principle of humanity and righteousness and the doctrines of right and wrong are mixed and confused. How do I know the difference among them? (Chapter 2, trans. Chan 1963:187-188)

If there is such a big difference of preferences between different kinds of animals, we can analogically infer that different people can be quite diverse in their thinking and preferences too. We cannot pretend the knowledge we have is the absolute truth, otherwise we would lose most of the perspectives that can also grasp the world in different but equally available angles.

2. and most importantly it bars us from seeing the world in its spontaneous, natural, and holistic dimension, that is, the Heaven (*Tien* 天) or Dao. The ultimate being and truth, Dao, is the intact reality in its integrity. It is the whole prior to any distinction or right-wrong judgment, and from which all distinctions and right-wrong judgments diverge. In short, language in use inevitably break the original wholeness of Dao, and the resulted fallenness into the incessantly distinguishing activities of "small knowledge" is what make our mundane life full of disturbances and stubbornness. A more genuine "flow" of life would be restricted or even be demised.

3.2 What Words have to Say is not Fixed

For philosophers contemporary to Zhuangzi's time, the relationship between *ming* (名, name) and *shi* (實, reality) or *wu* (物, thing) poses a fundamental question: Can names convey the essence of reality? To this question, Confucianism gives a positive answer. In the theory of *zhengming* (正名), Confucius demands that we should regulate the correct use of names, in order to make a person's commitment and behavior accord with his title (*ming* 名). This reflects a steady one-to-one correspondence of name and reference in his thinking. And this represents the monopoly and "dictatorship" of the confucian viewpoint and oversimplifies the reality. Zhuangzi says in Chapter 2,

Saying 言 is not blowing breath, saying says something; the only trouble is that what it says is never fixed. Do we really say something? Or have we never said anything? (Chapter 2, trans. Graham 2001: 52)

Not only because different people have different uses of words. But the world itself is in constant change; therefore no unique reference is possible. Both saying (language) and the objects signified are in permanent flux. Because signification is indeterminate that language is no more than shifting signifiers (Mollgaard 2007: 72-74), the language expressing the reality must constantly refresh, reinvent, and keep flexible of itself. What least of all we should do is to try to regulate and control language to make it fixed once

and for all. This explains again why we should not dispute to get the truth: what we should do instead is "get the meaning and forget the words (得意忘言):

The fish trap exists because of the fish; once you've gotten the fish, you can forget the trap. The rabbit snare exists because of the rabbit; once you've gotten the rabbit, you can forget the snare. Words exist because of meaning 意; once you've gotten the meaning, you can forget the words. Where can I find a man who has forgotten words so I can have a word with him? (Chapter 26, "External Things", trans. Watson 2013:233)

We cannot do without language. We need language in order to express meaning. But we have to forget or transcend the language we are using once we have gotten the meaning; otherwise we would be imprisoned in our own subjective perspective and cannot communicate with the others. Therefore, it should be clear that Zhuangzi does not demand us to abandon language, as he says he wishes to "have a word with" the one who has forgotten words. Forgetting words (忘言) is an act of transcendence, to get loose from the constraint of any language as vehicle of particular conceptual framework or *chengxin*. It's immense wisdom of Zhuangzi in his following words in chapter 2:

The Way [Dao] has never known boundaries; speech has no constancy.
But because of [the recognition of a] "this", there came to be boundaries.
(Chapter 2, trans. Watson 2013:13)

3.3 There is Something Ineffable in Language

Disputation cannot reach the ultimate truth. It is also because of a limitation of language: there are some important things inexpressible in words:

1. As said before, names attain their signifying function by making distinctions. But there is one thing which is beyond all distinctions: the ultimate being and truth, the Way/Dao. Therefore it goes quite natural that the Dao is ineffable. But Zhuangzi's viewpoint here is ambiguous: on the one hand he agrees that the cognitive language of "small knowledge", propositions of right/wrong judgment, is not capable to express and describe Dao; but on the other hand, there is another mode of language (great words 大言), as a tool of spiritual exercise, can get us to Dao. But let us postpone the clarification of this to the last section.
2. Secondly, there are other important things which is equally ineffable: knack, and the practical wisdom (*phronesis*, to borrow a term from Aristotle) of successful living. Apart from the famous story of Cook Ding 庖丁 in chapter 3 ("The Secret of Caring for Life 養生主"), we can also refer to another story in chapter 13 of the "Outer Chapters" entitled "The Way of Heaven 天道" for some stimulating insights:

Duke Huan was in his hall reading a book. The wheelwright Pian, who was in the yard below chiseling a wheel, laid down his mallet and chisel, stepped up into the hall, and said to Duke Huan, "This book Your Grace is reading - may I venture to ask whose words are in it?" "The words of the sages," said the duke. "Are the sages still alive?" "Dead long ago," said the duke. "In that case, what you are reading there is nothing but the chaff and dregs of the men of old!" "Since when does a wheelwright have permission to comment on the books I read?" said Duke Huan. "If you have some explanation, well and good. If not, it's your life!" Wheelwright Pian said, "I look at it from the point of view of my own work. When I chisel a wheel, if the blows of the mallets are too gentle, the chisel will slide and won't take hold. But if they're too hard, it will bite and won't budge. Not too gentle, not too hard - you can get it in your hand and feel it in your mind. You can't put it into words, and yet there's a knack to it somehow. I can't teach it to my son, and he can't learn it from me. So I've gone along for seventy years, and at my age I'm still chiseling wheels. When the men of old died, they took with them the things that couldn't be handed down. So what you are reading there must be nothing but the chaff and dregs of the men of old." (Chapter 13, trans. Watson 2013: 106-107)

Wheelwright Pian's knack is a simile to the art of living (the way of sagely within 內聖) and the leadership of the world (the way of kingly without 外王). What Zhuangzi sees as ineffable (cannot be objectively described in propositions as cognitive language) are not just skills (know-how) of particular crafts, but the skills required for successful living, that is, the "know-how" of sagely living and kingly rulership. According to Graham, "The Taoist art of living is a supremely intelligent responsiveness which would be undermined by analysing and choosing, and [...] grasping the Way is an unverbalisable 'knowing how' rather than 'knowing that.'" (Graham 2001:186) As most of the quarrels of the contemporary philosophers in Zhuangzi's time are about the art of living and ruling, Zhuangzi judges that the quarrels cannot be settled by disputation.

3.4 False Presuppositions of *Bian*/Disputation

Last but not least, there is still a serious problem in disputation. When we argue, we usually have the following presuppositions:

1. In disputation, we presuppose that there exists some viewpoint which is right without reservation, and all the remaining viewpoints are simply wrong.
2. When we argue, we are confident of our viewpoint as unquestionably right. Therefore all we try to do is to justify ourselves and to disprove the other.

But Zhuangzi thinks they are quite wrong and make all disputations futile. Disputers should be more modest in attitude and should not get into confrontations. He says:

A state in which "this" and "that" no longer find their opposites is called the hinge of the Way [or: the pivot of Dao 道樞]. When the hinge is

fitted into the socket, it can respond endlessly. (Chapter 2, trans. Watson 2013: 10)

1. In our "small knowledge" of *chengxin*, we should admit that none of us have the absolute truth expressed in words. But this is not to discredit all viewpoints. In fact, every viewpoint can be a perspective to understand the world, even though the understanding is provisional and one-sided. In disputation, because no one has the absolute truth, while everyone gets something out of his/her perspective, so we should treat all these viewpoints as complementary, not opposites. They all contain some truth and also have their faults. They are not mutually exclusive; they are actually small pieces of the puzzle. In a famous Chinese saying that captures this point quite well, "Combined, both are beautiful; separated, both are broken. 合則雙美，離則兩傷".
2. Therefore, what we should do is to free ourselves from the trap of adhering to only one viewpoint and deem it as absolute. We have to transcend our *chengxin* by opening ourselves to alternatives, to the multitude of perspectives. We should have an epistemic modesty (Hansen 1992) to be open-minded and flexible. Sincere communication begins with our recognition that we are small creatures with limited viewpoints. To be honest with our finitude, we as knowers should accommodate and cooperate, not confront and dispute. In fact, we are capable of understanding the viewpoints of others well enough to borrow their insights and reach agreements. In this way we can achieve "fusion of horizons" (to borrow an important concept from the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer) and get a more comprehensive viewpoint. We can enrich our knowledge by constructive dialogues with the others; try to see through the others' eyes.

4 Is Zhuangzi's Philosophy any Sort of Skepticism and Relativism?

Zhuangzi seems to advocate radical skepticism and relativism in the eyes of quite a number of renowned scholars (before, A.C. Graham is the most prominent; and recently, Hansen is the most quoted and discussed). One of them, Chad Hansen, famously argues that Zhuangzi defends radical skepticism and espouses a "perspectival relativism" which shows that all discrimination and classification are relative and so there are no standpoints from which anything can be known to be objectively true, especially regarding evaluative judgments. (Hansen 1992) But the present writer would like to prove that Zhuangzi in fact advocates no true skepticism and relativism.

If we follow Hansen's line of reasoning, Zhuangzi's standpoint would become "everything goes" relativism which is simply logically self-defeating. Moreover, Zhuangzi's skepticism would extend to the area of metaphysics; accordingly he cannot commit himself to any monistic conception of reality. If each perspective is equally valid, Zhuangzi cannot consistently advocate a single conception of Dao as the true or absolute reality. (Hansen 1992: 285-292) This contradicts with his claims of *Tien* and Dao: Zhuangzi do say that we can grasp the ultimate Being and Truth Dao by "great knowledge 大知".

The crucial point is that, according to Zhuangzi, we can transform our mundane human life of “small knowledge” mentioned before, transcend our limited perspectives, stop discriminations and disputations, and experience that this Life (the cosmic Life that our own lives are just a part) is moved by Heaven (*Tien*), or, better, be the movement of *Tien*. There are a good number of mentions of *Tien* in the book of *Zhuangzi* that unmistakably manifest Zhuangzi's belief in this ultimate reality (we can deem *Tien* and *Dao* as the same, at least in Zhuangzi's own “Inner Chapters”). Mollgaard has a brief summary:

Zhuangzi says that perfected human beings rely on Heaven's texture (tianli 天理) (3/6 [signifying chapter 3, section 6]), draw on their Heavenly mechanism (tianji 天機) (6/7), equalize things within the bounds of Heaven (tianni 天倪) (6/90), rest in the potter's wheel of Heaven (tianjun 天鈞) (2/40), illuminate things in the light of Heaven (zhaozhiyutian 照之於天) (2/29), and ultimately they enter into unity with vast Heaven (ruyuliaotianyi 入於寥天一) (6/82) and live engendered by Heaven (tianersheng 天而生) (6/1). (Mollgaard 2007:21)

What Zhuangzi means by all these sayings is that we are capable of giving up our “will to power” and right-wrong judgments in order to leave the state of “small knowledge” and get to the luminosity (ming 明):

Because of the right, there is the wrong, and because of the wrong, there is the right. Therefore the sage does not proceed along these lines (of right and wrong, and so forth) but illuminates the matter with Nature[聖人不由而照之於天]. [...] Therefore I say that there is nothing better than to use the light (of Nature)[莫若以明]. (Chapter 2, trans. Chan 1963:183)

The state of luminosity is not attained by empirical investigation or some discursive understanding, because these are still constrained by our *chengxin*. Zhuangzi wants us to practice the spiritual exercise(工夫) of “fasting of the mind (心齋)” (from chapter 4, “In the World of Men 人間世”) and “sit down and forget everything(坐忘)” (from chapter 6, “The Great and Venerable Teacher 大宗師”), in order to get the “great knowledge”. In brief, this is something like the “phenomenological reduction” or the “epoche” (surely they are quite different to “great knowledge” in their problematic and philosophical background, just similar on the point of losing all prejudices to the ideal of “presuppositionless”) proposed by European phenomenologists, meaning to suspend all our judgments (in Zhuangzi's case, mainly the right-wrong judgments), just let the things be seen as they are, without bias and without preference, to reach the state that “all things are seen to be equal (齊物)”. In other words, Zhuangzi wants us to see through the human “form” (small knowledge) to the ceaseless emergence of the cosmic Life itself. This kind of seeing is the defining characteristic of the “great knowledge” or “luminosity”, by which we can have holistic intuition (some scholars, Harold Roth for example, would argue that this is some kind of mystical experience) of Heaven/*Tien* or

Dao. And we shall be able to, as the *Tien* or Dao does, “pervade and unify” all things (道通為一) .

Hence Zhuangzi does not advance any true skepticism and relativism. However, a problem arises: should we abandon small knowledge once and for all, to live our life only in “great knowledge”? Or to put it another way: because language contains distinctions which would cause us falling into the incessantly distinguishing activities of small knowledge, should we abandon language once and for all? To answer this problem, let's look at a passage from chapter 6 “The Great and Venerable Teacher” of *Zhuangzi*:

He who knows what it is that Heaven [Tien] does, and knows what it is that man does, has reached the peak. Knowing what it is that Heaven does, he lives with Heaven. Knowing what it is that man does, he uses the knowledge of what he knows to help out the knowledge of what he doesn't know and lives out the years that Heaven gave him without being cut off midway - this is the perfection of knowledge. [...] When man and Heaven do not defeat each other, then we may be said to have the True Man [真人]. (Chapter 6, trans. Watson 2013: 42-44)

True Man is the ideal personality for Zhuangzi. This true man lives with *Tien*, and also lives with other men. In the former part he gets the “great knowledge” and lives holistically with the intact Dao, in the later part as a social animal he still lives in the human world carrying perspectives of small knowledge. That's why Zhuangzi says; “man and Heaven do not defeat each other”. In chapter 2 of *Zhuangzi* we have already known that to make right-wrong judgments of “small knowledge” is just our natural inclination, and such small knowledge (articulated in cognitive language) is actually necessary for our everyday living in the material as well as social worlds. To know Dao, certainly we do need to stop the discriminating activities and liberated from the fragmenting and thingly engagements of *chengxin*; but to “live out the years that Heaven gave him without being cut off midway”, we still have to get fallible knowledge through our limited perspectives (to solve all everyday problems and accommodate social lives). Zhuangzi is not some unrealistic, otherworldly hermit demanding us to live in colorless seclusion without conceptual thinking and social interactions. And he knows perfectly that we cannot stop the use of language and small knowledge; arguments for silence and do-nothingism are simply ridiculous and self-defeating. What he teaches is that we should learn from the holistic Dao that all perspectives are limited as they are developed on languages of differences, while at the same time all perspectives can be productive as all of them get glimpses of the same world, our world. This is why Zhuangzi advocates the principle of “the pivot of Dao 道樞”, urges us to have an epistemic modesty and try our best to learn from other viewpoints.

Therefore, the present writer does not agree with Hansen's relativist interpretation of Zhuangzi, that all perspectives are equally valid. Although no perspective is perfect, but we can still compare different perspectives to see which ones would be more open and comprehensive, and which ones would be more narrow-minded and one-sided. We have to look for some better viewpoints, which would be more far-reaching and more powerful in understanding our world. Surely comparisons can still be wrong, but we have to strive for "fusion of horizons" which is an infinite process. That's why Zhuangzi

makes a variety of factual claims and to endorse and condemn various ways of living. For example, immerse into the mundane life of “small knowledge” and disputation is bad; live the life of True Man is good. He does not doubt the truth of these value judgments, so we cannot treat them just like birds' singing in trees (as in Hansen 1983: 38-40). According to another Zhuangzi scholar Schwitzgebel, if Zhuangzi sometimes sounds skeptical, this is not strict skepticism but what he calls “everyday skepticism”:

I believe he wrote these passages with a therapeutic intent - that is, to jolt the reader into a certain kind of everyday skepticism, a kind of open-mindedness that consists in putting somewhat less faith than is standard in one's own and others' beliefs. Such open-mindedness may be both an epistemic and a moral boon, leading not only to a receptiveness to new evidence but also to a tolerance of people with different beliefs. (Schwitzgebel 1996: 91)

“Everyday skepticism”, strictly speaking, is intellectual caution and a kind of “skeptical spirit”, but not philosophical skepticism stating that no knowledge or truth is possible. In handling everyday conflicts between viewpoints or people, Zhuangzi makes the following recommendation:

Only the intelligent know how to identify all things as one. Therefore he does not use [his own judgment] but abides in the common [principle] [為是不用而寓諸庸]. The common means the useful 用 and the useful means identification 通. Identification means being at ease with oneself. When one is at ease with himself, one is near Tao. This is to let it (Nature) take its own course. (Chapter 2, trans. Chan 1963:184)

This is what Zhuangzi says in another place as “flowing 因是”, literally means “to affirm by following along”, in opposition to sticking to one's own fixed viewpoint (為是). The intelligent (or True Man) is the one who pervade and unify all things in “great knowledge”. Because of this great knowledge of Dao, he gets rid of “the will to power” to dominate others, becomes more sensible towards different viewpoints, and would not force others to comply with his own view. So he might appeal to past or existing common principle or practice to solve the conflict (surely it all depends on situation; no small knowledge of strict regulation can be given on this). And the reason of this is not the common principle is unquestionably right, but just because it is useful: it facilitates human communication (identification) and makes everybody feeling at ease.

Laozi says, “Those who know do not speak, those who speak do not know. 知者不言，言者不知” (Daodejing, LVI) But Zhuangzi takes a more positive stance towards language. Although it is true what saying says is never fixed and settled (as discussed before), but this is not a deficiency of language, because it is just how the world exists: ceaseless emergence and becoming. The problem is that we want to regulate and control language, in order to construct fixed viewpoints, to comply with our own limited perspectives. But such kind of language of right-wrong judgments loses contact with *Tien* or Dao, which is the only true being. That's why Zhuangzi urges us to get the

meaning and forget the words (得意忘言). And Mollgaard's following interpretation of Zhuangzi's disavowal of disputation is very insightful in this regard:

Therefore Zhuangzi regards disputation as the decline of saying. [...] In Zhuangzi's view, the problem is that the discourse of disputation takes the proposition to be the essence of language, and it reduces the question of what is genuine and real to the truth value of propositions. [...] Heidegger argues that originally the Greeks understood truth as unconcealment (*aletheia*), as coming-into-being, or *phusis* itself, and not as a function of propositional discourse. Similarly, for Zhuangzi saying (*yan*[言]) partakes in the movement of the Way, or the ceaseless coming-into-being that is life (*sheng*[生]). Disputation (*bian*) obscures this movement, and therefore the Way and saying decline together as disputation arises. (Mollgaard 2007:71)

There are two kinds of language (saying): the first one is the primordial and unpolluted language of Dao, which is flexible, playful and lively as Zhuangzi says, “The Way has never known boundaries; speech has no constancy. 夫道未始有封，言未始有常” (Chapter 2, trans. Watson 2013: 13) The second one is the language of propositional discourse, words having strict and stern signifying function, which in turn assumes particular perspectives.

This is Zhuangzi's theory of the paradoxical nature of language: that it can either unconceal (producing “great knowledge”) or conceal (producing small knowledge) Dao. Surely Zhuangzi would agree that expressions about the experience of Tien or Dao, or about how to be True Man (spiritual exercise), cannot be the cognitive, propositional language, but the language of the first kind, also known as the language of Dao. The first kind of language is named by Zhuangzi as “great words” and the second one as “little words”:

Great understanding [大知 or great knowledge] is broad and unhurried;
little understanding [小知 or small knowledge] is cramped and busy.
Great words[大言] are clear and limpid; little words[小言] are shrill
and quarrelsome. (Chapter 2, trans. Watson 2013:8)

“Great words” are the language we say after we have overcome our *chengxin*, through spiritual exercise. Moreover, “great words” are a part of our spiritual exercises too, an unceasing attempt to grasp the Dao, to live with the Dao, to be the Dao (in the sense of pervading and unifying all things 道通為一).

Therefore, it is just natural for Zhuangzi not to identify himself with any school of thought (for example, the so-called “Daoism” invented afterwards, and Confucianism and Mohism mentioned in chapter 2 in his book) or religion; because he knows all of them are limited. The Tao, the Being, the Truth (or even the God) cannot be hijacked and monopolized by any specific and finite perspective or cognitive “theory”. Nevertheless, he is not against any one of them either, because each of them can provide some insights in their own accord, which may be overlooked or even become invisible from other perspectives. Inevitably, facing the disputations between thinkers, Zhuangzi

would rather be an “outsider” or “onlooker”, always reminding himself not to be an arbitrator, to judge which the “right” one is and which the “wrong” ones are. In “Inner Chapters”, sometimes he freely learns and borrows from Confucianism, Mohism and Nominalism; and sometimes he freely teases and ridicules them too. To speak of Dao, he avoids the cognitive (propositional) “little words” language, but writes in a heuristic and poetic style, which is the “great words” of great knowledge: parabolic, shifty, witty, and anomalous.

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中国茶文化关键词以“茶”为词根的语义递进 ——从“茶叶”到“吃茶去”词语转换的价值审美蝶化

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讲题概要

作为灌木或小乔木的茶树嫩枝叶，由中国人发明成饮，这在时间上与中国历史文化的起始同步。唐朝陆羽《茶经》有言：“茶之为饮，发乎神农氏”。在漫长的历史演变进程中，喝茶已经从初起的生活习俗“饮用”，蜕变羽化为“场景”行为、“心灵情境”的精神审美价值诉求。这是作为东方文明一个十分重要的、由物质层面上升为精神层面的茶文化的真实构成。

当下时代，中国茶叶作为一种物质消费产品，虽然在国内法人单位产量的市场营销上，根本不及英国立顿公司的营销数据；中国茶文化作为一种精神价值追索，很可能在某种精神价值的“觉悟”、“意境”上，与日本茶道还存在着某种提炼、上升的价值空间——但是，中国茶文化的整个体系，已经成为一个博大精深、价值富集、人文绵密的行为方式与精神审美的“场景”艺术。这里，可以借助对中国茶文化关键词以“茶”为词根的语义递进、特别是借助对这些关键词在语义递进上涵义变化的分析研判，试图从一个实质有效但也十分有趣的关键词的语义论证，来科学地得出上面这样一个结论。

从“茶叶”到“茶情”。**茶叶**：灌木或小乔木，嫩枝无毛，叶革质，为长圆形或椭圆形，一般长4~12厘米、宽2~5厘米；**茶情**：中国哲学一直存在着一个“唯情”的价值维度，以饮茶“场景”的最高境界“物我相忘”而言，就是以饮茶来观世相、由茶情再推及人情，成为了一种才情与智慧的共通表现；**语义递进与涵义变化**：自茶叶到饮茶、到饮茶“场景”，其反映在人际关系上的茶理、茶情之道，就是中国茶习俗、茶文化十分注重人际关系“理解”与“沟通”的价值生成，也可以说有形与无形地开辟了开辟了一条由“茶”至“茶情”再至“人情”的哲理通道，这也是中国茶文化精神审美诉求的一个很具体的重要基础。

从“茶韵”到“茶人”。**茶韵**：韵为乐之节律，它是在一种审美条件下的和谐存在状态，这表现在饮茶的“场景”行为上，就是联通了“气场”的“茶汤四相”之融和——色泽、香气、滋味、气韵，如西湖龙井的“雅韵”，铁观音的“音韵”，普洱茶的“陈韵”，黄山毛峰的“冷韵”，台湾冻顶的“喉韵”，如是等等；**茶人**：“茶人”一词，最早见于唐朝皮日休《茶中杂咏·茶人》诗中，这里所言茶人，应为陆羽的“精行俭德之人”的标准，指饮茶“场景”行为的一种精神境界，即要有“茶韵”与人的灵犀之通；**语义递进与涵义变化**：饮茶韵味的生成和茶人的精神成立，在茶与人之间打通了一条茶品、茶韵而直到中

国古诗词境界的精神审美之路，其如南宋诗人杨万里在《谢木菴之舍人分送讲筵赐茶》诗里所说的那样——“故人气味茶样清，故人风骨茶样明”，茶人当具备清醇优雅的气质、坦诚高洁的情操，这是中国茶艺、茶道、茶文化必然的主体构成。

从“茶心”到“茶道”。**茶心**：中国茶文化有茶道六事，即由“茶礼、茶规、茶法、茶技、茶艺、茶心”构成，但其中最为重要、最为核心的就是茶心，为茶人者必怀茶心，既有一种心平气和、自我心境修炼提升的结果，而同时也一定要有茶规、茶技作为一定的行为形态匡定，方可品茶论道、与茶同心；**茶道**：茶道始于中国，但传播至日本而中兴，日本茶道著名人物武野绍鸥曾说过“放茶具的手，要有和爱人别离的心情”，这实际上说明了日本茶道讲求的是“唯韵”、“唯情”，其就与“禅道”存在着显然的区别——一个是由茶及情及心，一个是由心及意再及心；**语义递进与涵义变化**：茶心的提升萃取，茶道的修养成境，都是要有茶叶作为必备条件的，要以茶规、茶技作为形态表现，是从物质出发向着情感、认知、心境、精神状态、价值取向和哲理审美而逐步靠近、贴合直至祈求达到的融合，一方面是一种茶人的自我心灵精神境界的养成，另一方面也是向自我之外传达生活“场景”、生存方式、精神境界的一种行为和态度。

从“茶禅”到“吃茶去”。**茶禅**：茶禅也叫茶道禅或茶事禅，指佛教禅师把茶事活动作为参禅悟道的一种修行法门，简练地讲就是茶文化和禅文化的相通融合，而“茶禅一味”则是茶禅最核心理念，其源自宋朝的《碧岩集》，这在日本茶道、韩国茶道而被奉为“天下奇书”，茶禅的内容实质应为“互为表里、互为因缘、互为体用、互为能所”；**吃茶去**：“吃茶去”是著名的禅门公案，源自中国河北省石家庄市近旁赵县的柏林禅寺（时称观音院），其影响入脾入心之浩大深远，至今仍只可意会而不可言传，它成为了“禅茶一味”的核心价值基础，正所谓芸芸众茶人、不可知禅心——但是，还是可以有一个自我认知的认知感悟结果：任凭万事万物动而不动我心，任凭我心动而不动万事万物；**语义递进与涵义变化**：由茶禅才有可能至“吃茶去”，而“吃茶去”则为中国茶文化、茶禅文化精神审美的至真至阔至高境界，“吃茶去”的精神包容、心境开放、物我两忘、自然而然、天人合一，很自然地把一种对“灌木或小乔木的茶树嫩枝叶”的发明饮用，无边界、无休止地推升到了东方文明的哲学高点。

可以有的结论。从以上对中国茶文化关键词以“茶”为词根的语义递进的分析研判中，可以明晰、确定地得出这样一个结论：那就是中国茶文化关键词转换、变化的实质与核心，就是一个由“茶叶”到“吃茶去”精神价值审美破茧蝶化的进程和过程。这个在中国历史文化长河中非常具有独特气质、独特气韵、独特理念和独特哲思的文化形态，不但具体地以物质的形态在传承和承载着中国文化哲学的精髓，而且还在以一个人人皆可在日常生活中俗以习成的“场景”状态，如沐春风、如春风化雨般地吹佛着、浸润着社会人们的肉体 and 心灵。

The following is an abridged English translation of the above paper

Progressive Semantic Analysis of Keywords in Chinese Tea Culture — Esthetic Metamorphosing from "Tea Leaves" to "Tea Drinking"

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Abstract. The article analyses words in Chinese tea culture that are derived from the root word "tea". They include *tea leaves*, *tea feelings*, *tea rhythm*, *tea drinker*, *tea mind*, *tea ceremony*, *tea Zen* and *tea drinking*. Progressive semantic analysis of these words and changes in their implications clearly point to one conclusion: the semantic progression and changes in connotation of the keywords used in the Chinese tea culture portray the metamorphosis of the spiritual values and esthetic conceptualization from "tea leaves" to "tea drinking". This concrete, outward expression not only reflects the unique quality, artistic conception, ideology and philosophy of thousands of years of Chinese civilization, but also inherits and captures the very essence of Chinese culture and philosophy.

Abridged Article

The history of Chinese tea drinking dates back to the legendary Emperor Shennong, who was said to have lived around 5000 years ago. The practice of drinking tea has since evolved from an act of drinking to "scenario-based" behavior, taking the spirit and inward feelings of human beings to a higher level. The Chinese tea culture has developed into a broad, profound, value-enriched and beautiful art of its own which entails the pursuit of spiritual values and spiritual "awakening". This can be illustrated by the many words used to describe the tea culture that are derived from the root word "tea", and their semantic progression.

From "tea leaves" to "tea feelings". The change of words and its semantic progression from tea leaves which grow on a small shrub, to drinking tea and the scenario of drinking tea can be compared to the understanding and logical development of interpersonal relationships as the Chinese tea culture emphasizes "understanding" and "communication" in human relationships.

From "tea rhythm" to "tea drinker". In music, rhythm represents harmony and co-existence but in the scenario of drinking tea, the color, the aroma, the taste and the flavor of tea create harmony, immersing the tea drinker in an experience of spiritual beauty as described in Chinese poetry. Most Chinese tea drinkers are characterized by their calm and graceful disposition which exudes an aura of elegance, a result of the nexus of tea art, tea ceremony and tea culture.

From "tea mind" to "tea ceremony". Tea ceremony originated from China but gained its huge popularity in Japan. Tea ceremony in Japan is a crystallization of "tea harmony" and "tea feelings". All these will not be possible without tea leaves. In fact,

tea etiquette in the technique of making tea is outward expression of inner emotions; recognition of spirituality and mind, as well as preferential values; and appreciation of beauty, elevating to a state of harmony and spiritual maturity for a tea drinker on the one hand, and a form of self-expression in a life "scenario" on the other. It is a way of life, a type of spiritual behavior and attitude.

From "tea Zen" to "tea drinking". Buddhist Zen masters treat tea ceremonies and tea activities as a form of training and Zen awakening, leading to the fusion of Zen and tea cultures, or what is called "tea-Zen culture". Tea drinking pushes tea-Zen culture to the broadest and highest levels, joining "heaven and earth" to reach the core values of the philosophy of Eastern civilization. This is often described as the highest realm of Zen meditation.

The analysis above points to one conclusion: the semantic progression and changes in the keywords used in the Chinese tea culture portray the metamorphosis of the spiritual values and esthetic conceptualization from "tea leaves" to "tea drinking". The reflection of core values in the "scenario" of tea drinking not only inherits and incorporates the essence of Chinese culture and philosophy, but also nourishes people's body and soul.

Absence of Fathers·Surrogate Fathers·Patricide: The Fathers in 97 and Post-97 Hong Kong Films

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Abstract. Under colonial rule, Hong Kong has always been cultivated to be passive, marginal and dependent. Under the influence of the colonists of subjectivity, independence, Hong Kong has never fully owned an independent regime, orthodoxy, discourse power and so on. Therefore, Hong Kong films have never had the opportunity to build a positive image of fathers which expresses its own subjectivity.

Through an analysis of *Days of being Wild*, *The 1997 Trilogy*, *The Infernal Affairs* (film series), *Election*, *Election2*, my paper tries to examine how the absence of father has been reflected in the Hong Kong 97 and post 97 films. How has the absence of father changed? Does this change reflect Hong Kong's political collective unconsciousness? In search of this I turn to the ideas of the colonial political policy (non-politicize) and theory regarding Benedict Anderson's concept of imagined community and indigenous consciousness as a means of understanding the interaction between 97 and post 97 films and Hong Kong politics. This analysis shows that the interaction between the films and politics is either the films anticipated Hong Kong politics or reflected Hong Kong's political situation.

We conclude with results of Absence of Fathers, Surrogate Fathers and Patricide in the Hong Kong 97 and post 97 films. The results do not only help us gain a greater understanding of similar films, but also explain why the absence of positive image of fathers in the Hong Kong 97 and post 97 films.

Keywords: absence of father, political policy, subjectivity, local awareness

1. 導論

在英國一百五十年殖民統治期間，香港逐漸被培養成一個被動、邊緣、依賴，失去主體性的地方。活在殖民者主體的陰影下，香港從來沒有充分，獨立擁有過政權和話語權。故此，作為香港文化重要載體的電影，從來沒有機會，也不知如何去建立彰顯主體性的正面「父親」形象。

歷來對 97 及後 97 電影的研究，焦點多數集中於香港這一「遊子」的身份認同，而忽略了對塑造「遊子」身份的父親。在 1997 年之前，父親的形象在《阿飛正傳》、《香港製造》等敘述 97 的電影中付諸厥如；97 年之後，經歷了 97 年金融風暴和二零零三年七一遊行之後，父親的形象轉以代父出現。在著名電

影系列「無間道」三部曲中，父親缺席已經「惡化」為弑父。中國文化講究倫理，「五倫」向來以「君父」領綱，如果父權代表統治形象本身，那麼，這一父親遭遇的轉變是否港人無意識對統治者的逃避，反叛，乃至割裂。

本論文希望通過對《阿飛正傳》、「九七三部曲」、「無間道系列」、《黑社會》、《黑社會 2》等電影的分析，研究 97 前後香港電影中父親遭遇的轉變：父親缺席在 97 前後的香港電影如何展現？父親的遭遇有什麼變化？這種變化是否反映香港人的集體政治無意識？

我們認為，97 前後香港電影中父親遭遇轉變可以概括為：無父·代父·弑父。而電影中父親的種種遭遇與變化，越到後期與香港 97 前後的政治氛圍愈趨密切。此一研究，不但可以幫助我們更好理解該類型電影，而且可以解釋香港 97 前後電影中正面父親形象缺席之因，甚至為香港的殖民與後殖民電影研究，提供一種父子模式研究方式。

2. 父親缺席：「孤兒一代」的焦慮

1997 年之前，關於 97 的香港電影其中一個共同點是父親這一角色的缺席。「父親是誰？」這個問題在關於 97 的香港電影很少談及。「父親」這個無名者在港人的記憶中成為一種長久的空白，在香港電影裡面，孤兒是香港的身份，香港逐漸成為一個自力更生的，沒有血脈相承，孤零零的存在。這種父親的缺席，造成了兒子身份的曖昧不清，喻示子與父難於彌合的斷裂，既然血緣對接被延宕，那麼文化的認同就被擱置，於是，產生身份認同危機的焦慮。

1997 之前，香港人不能對接英國的血系和種族，造成身份的懸浮¹。尤其在 1984 年中英簽署《中英聯合聲明》之後，香港電影集體出現一種「孤兒情結」，港人認為自己是被拋棄的一方，這種情緒出現在《阿飛正傳》、《香港製造》、「麥兜系列」等影片中。在《阿飛正傳》一片中，阿飛自小被貴族出身的母親拋棄，長大後，他親身到菲律賓去尋求見面，卻被拒之門外。一般電影中慈祥的母親角色，在這部電影，在這裡變得不近人情，成為空洞的能指——存在的證據只有幾封信和側面的鏡頭。而父親從來沒有提及，「父親」這個話語權、道統的象徵，在一個男性/父子掌握話語權的社會裡，竟然「被缺席」，難免讓人將電影對應香港前途談判過程中香港人的「被缺席」一事——既然兩大父權（國）不把香港當回事，那麼香港電影定然不會對「父親」這個角色有什麼期待，在關於 97 的電影中也不會進行書寫。父親缺席類香港電影表現的正是 90 年代孤立無援，缺乏強大夫權助力的香港人。

更為突出的父親缺席來自陳果的電影《香港製造》。主角中秋、阿龍和阿萍三人的父親都是隱遁且不負責任的。中秋的父親喜歡包二奶，不負擔對中秋母子的責任，連基本的家用也要剋扣，要中秋的媽媽不斷催促。因此，中秋不得不跟蹤他父親，鏡頭里中秋遠遠尾隨父親，整部電影對父親就沒有一個近景，絕大部分皆是遠景。父親對中秋而言，既陌生又不可親近。

¹ 西西寫於 1986 年的《浮城誌異》裡面的懸浮的小城正好就是香港當年的處境

阿萍的家庭更加不堪，她患腎病，父親沉迷賭博，欠下一身賭債，撇下妻兒，自己一個人遠遁他方。身罹絕症的阿萍因此一再被古惑仔騷擾，還差點被人買入妓院。另一男角阿龍最為悲慘，因為智商的問題，被家人遺下，流浪在外，被人欺負，成為一個弱智的古惑仔，最後還因攜帶毒品而被人殺死。上述三者都有一個相同之處：就是父親在電影裡面基本是沒有出現過的，不肯面對責任，惹禍之後讓年輕人承擔。中秋的父親仍沒有一個正面的描繪，只是幾個遠鏡，就是有對白的地方也只是通過電話。父子的關係顯得那麼的抽離和疏遠。疏離、陌生、焦慮、對未來的恐懼和斷裂，是 97 香港電影對這個時代的縮影。

3. 代父：本土父親的虛擬

英國在百多年殖民統治中，通過「非政治化」²，成功引導香港人重視經濟而忽略建立彰顯其主體性的團體或機構。在香港前途談判中，中、英雙方也無意讓任何有「香港人代表」參與談判。基本法是在中英聯合聲明簽署，「收回」香港的命運決定後才著手草擬，而且參與基本法草擬的港方「草委」、「諮委」，大多由中方委任。香港人在其中的話語權甚少。「九七」回歸後，香港經歷了金融風暴，經濟低迷，管治日趨低效，面對周圍的競爭和中央的強勢政權，香港人希望看到來自本地的父權，支撐香港鳳凰涅槃，突破迷茫，建立自我。

備受拋棄的港人，化為香港電影中的「孤兒一代」，他們難於確認自己身份的認證和來源。在無父狀態下，電影中出現了代父現象，如在「無間道系列」裡面，擁有強勢父權象徵的警察黃警司和黑幫頭子韓琛，成為了臥底黑幫陳永仁和臥底警方劉建明的精神之父。

無間道系列與《黑社會》《黑社會 2》中，無父狀態下缺乏管教的青少年加入團體，暴力機構代替了父輩的權威性教導和控制，以原始的法制/「忠義」觀念為精神號召，構成一個以家族觀念為內核的體系。

《黑社會》裡面社團中的德高望重的前任坐館鄧伯，對於警方宣稱「誰犯罪我就抓誰」以及要掃掉代客停車、斷掉社團經濟來源的警告，泰然處之，他說：「沒規矩就沒秩序。」社團已經成了社會構成的一部分，他們是比殖民政府歷史更悠久的存在。《黑社會》開篇字這樣描述「：三百年前，他們被稱為義士」，他們是根於傳統文化的「忠義」的真正中國人，在這個充滿陽剛和秩序的環境中，經過父子的建構過程，建立了等級秩序，類似父權的社會賦予迷茫的青少年一種類似政權的依賴。

此外，在「無間道系列」中，年輕的劉建明升職時被問到對九七後的前景有沒有信心，匪徒臥底的劉卻以一口流利的英語說：the law will back me up（「法律會在背後支持我」），表現出對未來使用非英語系統以及非普通法的

² 根據羅永生所言，非政治化及其後果是：「非政治化」的政策，將香港人型塑成一種只顧經濟成就，不理政治的經濟動物，並由此而為「香港身分」做定位。事後證明，這種非政治化的香港歸屬感，最「成功」的地方是令香港前途談判出現之時，香港人都失去了自發參與的行動力，任由中英兩國擺佈。見羅永生等：《香港——本土與左右》（台北：聯經出版事業股份有限公司，2014）。

政權信心的缺乏，英語的使用和求救非大陸的普通法系統，更加證明其對外來父權的不信任。

因此，呼喚/製造本地父親有了迫切的需要。《無間道》中黃秋生扮演的黃警司成為了雙重身份的臥底陳永仁的「精神之父」。在電影其中讓人印象最深刻的一場，兩人在北角政府合署的天臺上的見面，背對香港碧藍的天空，下俯壯麗的維多利亞海港，這次見面不僅僅是傳統臥底警匪片中上司與臥底之間的見面交流，更渲染出一份濃烈的本土父子情。陳永仁說：「三年之後，又三年。大哥，十年都快到了。」不僅是其對臥底生涯的厭倦，而且是對香港回歸 6 年，社會民主和經濟倒退所發的牢騷。而作為隱形父親的黃警司，是典型代表正義的使者，他高大穩重的形象，沉著靈活的應變方式，談笑間消解了陳永仁的不安與牢騷，是虛擬的理想父親形象。

在中英兩大強父權之下，港人只能借助其他的強大力量，其他的暴力系統，去助長自己的信心，建立自己的實力，甚至主體性。港人正是通過這個隱形的父親，企圖虛擬父親以建立自我。

4. 弑父：精神的越獄

正如心理學家所論述的父子關係一樣，只要存在父親的權威，子便似乎只是一個非男性。父子關係，是主體與客體的體現：陽為主，陰為輔；陽率陰，陰佐陽；陽為君，陰為臣；陽為父，陰為子；陽為夫，陰為婦。「子」那種從屬、服從於父的「陰」屬地位很能說明其閹割情節。³父子如此，作為父子關係政治化的君臣關係亦無二致。君乃唯一絕對之陽，在這個唯一絕對的男性父親面前，一切社會上的男性，不論尊卑，都無形中只能拿處於「陰」或「非陽」的地位。香港人歷來是被統治之民，實際處於被閹割的地位，意味著他們向來帶著對能否滋生主體的焦慮。

在《無間道》裡面，黃警司與陳永仁的父子之情，固然為真。可是黃對陳的承諾，即完結臥底的生涯，便可回到警隊「說了九千多次」⁴，還沒有兌現。因此，陳永仁的生死和命運，其實掌握在黃警司的手裡。故此，黃警司之死對陳永仁而言，固然會感到悲痛，但也是也是他擺脫哺育，獨立解決問題，決定自己的命運之機會。而劉建明面對獨裁家長般的韓琛，不堪受控成為長期的傀儡，為擺脫無間地獄，他伺機殺掉韓琛，為自己人生做主。二者皆可視為（精神上的）弑父，這樣一來，自己才能成為「話語」的主體和心理認同的對象，兩人在「弑父」過程中建立了自我，成功接過了話語權，從而掌握了權力。拍攝於二零零三年七一大遊行前後的《無間道》三部曲，傳遞了回歸五年的「解殖」的政治無意識，正如羅永生所言：「真正徹底的解殖過程，應該是從殖民結構下解放住民們被壓抑剝奪的獨立主體精神」⁵，只有擁有自主性，才能香港問

³ 孟悅、戴錦華：《浮出歷史地表》，（鄭州：河北出版社，1989），頁 19。

⁴ 《無間道》第一集中，黃警司與陳永仁第一次在天台見面的對話。

⁵ 羅永生等：《香港——本土與左右》，（台北：聯經出版事業股份有限公司，2014）。

題，香港解決。

5. 結論

經過上述的敘述分析，我們知道香港 97 及後 97 的電影與香港的政治環境密切相關。如說父親缺席，只是一種無意識的政治氛圍反映，那麼英文名為 Election（選舉）的《黑社會》系列是香港電影接入政治，尋找代父，甚至挑戰父輩權威的表現。而精神上的弑父，更是香港意識到自我問題，通過「解殖」解決問題，企圖擺脫歷史問題的一種出路。由此可見，雖然父親的形象並不常見於關於 97 的香港電影，可是父權卻潛行在這類電影中，而父對子的影響焦慮，父子間對抗與撕裂，更是 97 後“解殖”，建立自我意識的集體無意識反映。故此，父親的遭遇轉變確實是回歸多年政治光譜反映在電影中一部分。

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The Drama-Based Approach as a Meaning-Making Activity in Second Language Learning

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Abstract. This paper studies how process drama affords second language (in this case English) learners to construct meaningful actions for a more effective learning process. Following Stevick (1976), we suggest that meaningful actions are underpinned by two conditions *relevance* and *depth*. We analyse four major aspects of process drama, namely contextualization, agency, interactivity and enactment, to show what meaningful actions they can generate and how these meaningful actions empower students in the learning process. Typical meaningful actions engendered in these four aspects include physical set-up of the ‘as-if’ world, build-up of the narrative structure, identity-making, construction of the ideal self, co-construction of dialogue, and enactment of ideas, emotions, social norms and values. All these actions we argue have significant effects on helping second language learners to gain a deeper or an emergent understanding of the meaning and use of the target language, English.

Keywords: language learning, drama, meaning making

1 Introduction

In the last 20 years or so, there has been an abundant amount of research studies and discussions on the use of drama activities for second language (L2) teaching and learning. (See for example Winston (2012)) These studies and discussions, mostly conducted by drama educators and language teachers, offer some good and comprehensive observations on how the affordances of drama facilitate learners’ performance or empower them in L2 or foreign language learning and what language areas benefit most from the intervention of drama activities. Their orientation, however, is mainly on teaching effectiveness, the pertinence of language elements to drama-based approaches, and promotion of various language skills. Interesting and insightful as they are in terms of language pedagogy, they tend to be rather descriptive and practically-oriented in relating dramatic features and techniques to the teaching and learning activities. They have not, however, probed into the deeper psychological or linguistic reasons why drama can play such a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of L2 learning. For example, they simply assume that the communal nature of drama leads to more interactions in the L2 classroom and therefore positive results in learning the target language. Some discussions of the significance of drama activities may even be more indirect. For instance, to ask students to reflect on their drama performance in a

following writing task is only a pedagogical strategy and there is no direct link to the explanation why drama can significantly affect L2 learning.

In this paper, we identify four aspects of process drama that can afford L2 (in this case English) learners to conduct meaningful actions for a more effective learning experience and they are: contextualization, agency, interactivity and enactment. As defined by Stevick (1976), meaningful actions refer to those classroom actions that make a difference to an individual in relation to his or her entire range of drives and needs. He further suggests that meaningful actions are inextricably linked up with two conditions—*relevance* and *depth*—which are central to learners' experience of the target language. Meaningful actions are *relevant* because they make 'the connection between something on the external dimension of human experience with something on the internal dimension of student's appreciation of self' (Kristjánsson 2013: 11). They are with *depth* because learners have 'a greater sense of control in the learning situation' (Arnold and Murphey 2013, p. 9) due to the fact that the activities concerned are more 'cognitively and affectively engaging, challenging, playful' (Maley 2013: 148) and can trigger the learner's higher attention or noticing. We also assume that these two conditions, *relevance* and *depth*, underpin two major factors, i.e. motivation and consciousness, for effective L2 learning, which is well supported by neurobiological evidence (see for example Zull (2002, 2011)). Typical meaningful actions, which are invariably invoked in process drama, include the representative (physical) set-up of the 'as-if' world, build-up of the narrative structure, construction of the ideal self, co-construction of dialogue and experience, and enactment of ideas, emotions, beliefs and values via kinesthetic and gestural movement in connection with the semiotic potential offered by the 'as-if' world. All these actions we argue have significant effects on the use, and therefore a deeper or an emergent understanding of the linguistic aspects, of the target language, English.

In terms of methodology, our discussion and analysis are based on a critical survey of the proposals given in the literature about meaning-making activities in L2 learning and their significance. We also review some recent and relevant literature on using drama activities to teach a second or an additional language. Our arguments for the meaning-making potential in process drama are illustrated with both primary and secondary lesson plans and video recordings of actual classroom teaching using the drama-based approach.

The outline of the subsequent sections of this paper is as follows. In Section 2, we give a summary of the characteristics of process drama and introduce the complexity theory (theory of emergentism) as advocated by scholars such as Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008). We pay particular attention to the enhancement of consciousness, as it can be the result of empowerment via the various component features of drama. Section 3 investigates the contextualization of the physical environment and events in the 'as-if' world which bears on the conditions of *relevance* and *depth* in L2 learning. Section 4 deals with the aspect of agency development or expression in process drama, typically effectuated by the specific character role the learner takes on in a dramatic performance. In Section 5, we look at how the verbal interactions between participants in the process drama constitute meaningful actions in the L2 learning process. Section 6 provides an analysis of the significance of enactment in process drama. Section 7 is the conclusion.

2 Process Drama and the Complexity Theory

2.1 Process Drama

While drama in education is considered useful in the holistic development of students, drama—especially process drama—is considered by many educators to serve some particular and significant functions in second language learning. (See for example Winston (2012)) Apart from providing communicative exercises for practising the four language skills, there is a deeper level of significance that process drama, in which the teacher and students together work through a problem or situation by means of improvisation, can contribute to language learning. Owing to its form and means of expression, which are performance-oriented, contextualized, structural, problem-solving and spontaneous, process drama helps students to learn to use the target language to communicate more relevantly and appropriately in an environment of approximate authenticity.

The use of drama in education is always said to have the function of enhancing students' motivation and interest in learning. These enhancing effects may ultimately be the result of a number of specific or unique benefits that students have obtained from participating in drama-in-education activities. For their personal development, drama-in-education helps develop 'children's personal resources such as self-confidence, self-esteem, social skills, communication, emotional resilience, empathy, physical expressiveness, collaborative and cooperative skills and processes' (Chang 2012, p. 6). Because it is multimodal in nature, 'drama can stimulate the visual, kinesthetic and auditory aspects of learning' (Chang 2012, p. 7). Its communal nature, students interacting and communicating with other participants in a particular context, encourages shared responsibility and therefore risk-taking. Because of the possibility of changing time, space and identities in drama, the fictional world can provide students with a sense of ownership, autonomy and motivation to contribute verbally in order to keep the drama going and extend its scope and depth. Working in role and in the fictional 'as-if' context of drama may also enhance creativity since students can try out and experiment with new ideas, concepts, values, roles and language in action. (See Chang (2012), p. 6)

Research in second language learning has also shown that the use of drama can bring forth a range of benefits in the contextualisation of language; motivation, confidence and enthusiasm; safe atmosphere of the drama classroom; shift in power from teachers to students. (See Stinson (2012), p. 70) Also, drama creates a physical context for experiencing language, which uses not only words/texts but also other means such as objects, gestures, sounds and images for communicating meaning.

The use of drama activities to teach English as second language may appear in a variety of forms. (See Kao and O'Neill (1998)) In this paper, we focus on the most extended and elaborated one, process drama, which is structured, contextualized, problem-solving and spontaneous. Tyler and Warner (2006: 5) summarize its major characteristics as follows:

- separate scenic units linked in an organic manner;
- thematic exploration rather than an isolated or random skit or sketch;
- a happening and an experience which does not depend on a written script;

- improvisational activity;
- outcomes not predetermined but discovered in process;
- a script generated through action;
- the leader actively working both within and outside the drama.

The principle aim of process drama is to simulate the real-world situations and events so that L2 students learn, practise or consolidate English in an environment of approximate authenticity. Thus, in short, process drama is a meaning-making activity, which is purposeful, exploratory, community-building and above all creative-oriented in the use of the target language. This means participants in the dramatic process have the opportunity to use and process language in a way that is relevant to themselves and in depth (as opposed to mechanical repetition and raw memorization).

2.2 The Complexity Theory (Theory of Emergentism) in Language Learning

The complexity theory (theory of emergentism) essentially takes the view that L2 learning is ‘the constant adaptation and enactment of language-using patterns in the service of meaning-making in response to the affordances that emerge in a dynamic communicative situation’ (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008, p. 158). This view fits in squarely with what we explain in this paper about the meaning-making actions afforded by process drama which can effectuate the process of L2 learning.

In the theory of emergentism, ‘[language] is conceived of as the emergent properties of a multi-agent, complex, dynamic, adaptive system’ (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman 2006). This theory assumes that language use and acquisition emerge from basic processes that are not specific to language, and it is the result of the interaction of a number of simpler and more basic non-linguistic factors. O’Grady, Lee & Kwak (2011) consider that these factors ‘include features of human physiology (the vocal tract, for instance), the nature of the perceptual mechanisms, the effect of pragmatic principles, the role of social interaction in communication, the character of the learning mechanism, and imitations on working memory and processing capacity – but not inborn grammatical principles’. This is in stark contrast to the innateness hypothesis of language acquisition propounded by the formalists, while excels the sociocultural theories in that strong psychological and neuroscientific components are included. Ellis and Larsen-Freeman (2006) further suggest that consciousness is the element that helps to coordinate the various factors mentioned above for bringing about the emergence phenomenon in the process of language acquisition. In the discussion that follows, we also consider that ‘consciousness’ should include the ordinary meaning of ‘attention’ and ‘noticing’ on a more basic level, as what we find in the ‘attention’ models for the study of SLA. In the main, our discussion focuses on the argument that certain aspects of process drama can empower L2 learners by heightening their consciousness or attention in the process of learning the target language.

3 Contextualization

In general, the ‘as-if’ world, rather than being ‘real’ in terms of time, space and the physical environment, does hold some authenticity that comes from the psychological and emotional effects and the actual experience from participating in the drama process which is, in many cases, a problem-solving process. This means that the use of the target language has direct relevance to oneself and thus engages one’s attention and consciousness more. Some example activities are hide-and-seek and singing in process drama. In the following, we look more closely at the meaning-making potential of contextualization in process drama.

Contextualization, or framing, of the ‘as-if’ world and its elaboration as a community of actions, is indeed quite unique in process drama. Not only are the contexts thus created more elaborate and larger in scale in physical representations than those in other kinds of language learning tasks, but also the eventualization, which is narrative in nature, is to be co-constructed by the community members thematically and acted out with both spoken language and paralinguistic expressions. In this section, we will look at (i) the global aspects of the contextualization of the ‘as-if’ world, namely the representation of three areas: the physical environment or objects, relationships in the community created, social/cultural values, norms and artifacts; (ii) contextualization of individual events and actions within the drama; and (iii) structuring of the dramatic actions or the narrative at issue.

The framing of the global aspects of the ‘as-if’ world is significant to L2 learning since it makes visible the physical objects and makes clear and specific the relationships and social/cultural norms involved in this world. This act of concretization not only generates more stimulation and cognitive impact, and hence higher motivation, for learners, but also reduces their cognitive effort in using the target language in describing and interpreting all this surrounding and embedded information. In fact, this concretization of objects and ideas greatly assists learners, especially those that do not have a rich vocabulary, in communication since they can rely on strategies such as pointing, gesturing or shared understanding in dialoguing.

The contextualization of individual scenes or actions in process drama is well supported by a number of dramatic techniques and strategies, including *conscience alley*, *flashback*, *hot-seating*, *miming*, *proxemics*, *soliloquy*, *tableau*. We will use the two strategies, *tableau* and *conscience alley*, to show how dramatic techniques help participants to gain prominent relevance and depth in the language learning process.

Students in the *tableau* convention, sometimes referred to as *still image* or *freeze-frame*, use their own bodies to create an image, in order to capture an idea, theme, or moment in time from the drama. The linking up of two or more *freeze-frame* images will develop a narrative sequence or to predict possible outcomes of some actions. (See Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2003)) Such manipulation clearly helps learners to ‘visualize’ or concretize abstract ideas or actions for better conceptualization, which in turn enhances their understanding of the related language items or elements. The other strategy, *conscience alley*, is useful in exploring the thoughts of a character who is going through a dilemma or a very complex mental state. The participants form two lines facing each other and the designated character walks between the lines while each member of the two groups speaks their advice. The designated character then makes his or her decision after walking through the alley. (See Drama Resources (2015))

The assisting group members in this activity have become the inner voices of the designated character which analyze a dilemma or express different views on a certain issue. In other words, the inner voices construct a frame of reference, which include different views or pieces of information, for the designated character to consider and check against. Furthermore, the assisting group members also scaffold the designated character's use of language with respect to the dilemma he or she is facing, since they have practised using the relevant language before he or she speaks.

Dramatic structure is also a contextualized feature of process drama that we consider capable of exercising significant empowerment dynamic on L2 learners' consciousness. The common conception of dramatic structure, which originated from Freytag (1863), is made up of five parts, exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement. Though not in exact correspondence, the lesson plans of process drama from Hong Kong primary and secondary schools we have reviewed follow a common structure which includes three phases: initiation, experience and reflection. Piazzoli (2012: 139) summarizes the content of these three phases as follows: 'The initiation phase is where a shared belief in roles and situations is negotiated with the students. The experiential phase is where students experience the interweaving of process drama conventions. The reflective phase is where they process their experiences to make meaning from them.' This form of presentation is considered by Kao and O'Neill (1998) to be a kind of strategic interaction (see Di Pietro, 1987) as an approach to language teaching and learning. They further suggest that this strategic interaction is a thematically cohesive and purposeful event in which students create their own dialogue, have to respond in their own way to the challenge of communication contained in the interaction, and make decisions as to outcomes.

Based on the description above, we can generalize that the development of a structured process drama in the L2 classroom, a particular form of contextualization, bears the intrinsic characteristics of being meaning-making with a purpose, exploratory rather than explanatory, and problem-solving. These characteristics are complemented with the presentational features of being spontaneous, unpredictable and negotiation-based. All these characteristics of a structured process drama correspond very well with the factors that are conducive to the emergency of new forms and properties in L2 learning as proposed by the theory of linguistic emergentism. As a matter of fact, of all the consequences that these characteristics produce, two of them, namely the searching for relevant ideas for the development of the story and the uncertainty involved in spontaneous verbal interaction, impose considerable tension onto the learner, compelling them to use the target language relevantly and appropriately in the communication. This tension is one element that can heighten the learner's consciousness which is pivotal to the language emergency effect. In sum, dramatic structure plays an important role in effecting the tension and consequently the related attention and consciousness that is considered by the emergentists to be crucial in L2 learning.

4 Agency

The aspect of agency development or expression in process drama is typically effectuated by the specific character role the learner takes on in a dramatic performance, such as being a king, a doctor or a personified figure. The idea of agency may be understood as ‘an individual (or collective) capacity for self-awareness and self-determination: decision-making, ability to enact or resist change, and take responsibility for actions’ (Carson 2012: 48). Apart from assuming a new identity, taking up a new role has the effect of contributing to the autonomy and ownership (possession of whatever features of the language used) of the learner. Autonomy can be seen as the ‘capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action’ (Little 1991:4). This attribute implies independent action. When realized in the learner taking part in process drama, it creates certain amount of tension, and therefore enhances the learner’s consciousness in learning the target language. (See Baquedano-López, et al. (2005) for a discussion of how tensions in ongoing classroom activity lead to the creation of new knowledge and the actualization of curricula) The other role-taking effect, claiming ownership, can also enhance consciousness through tension, since it implies a change of power structure and the claim of equity in the fictitious world—i.e. the learner is on an equal footing with the real-world authority, the teacher. At the same time, ownership also gives the learner control and self-determination in the use of the target language. But this also delegates responsibility to the learner accordingly. Again, tension will arise as a result of this particular action.

A more recent in-depth analysis of agency by applied linguists is associated with the act of identity-making and self-validation. We argue that in process drama this agency behaviour takes place both in the real world, the situation where the learner is a member of a particular English learning community, and in the ‘as-if’ world, the situation where the learner takes on a fictitious character role. The dramatic technique, *conscience alley*, which has been introduced in Section 3, offers a good illustration of the interplay between the real world and the fictitious world with reference to the learner’s creation of identity and validation of the self. In this activity, learners’ multiple identities are created, one being the student/learner identity in the real world assisting the performance of a communal task, and the other being the ‘fictitious identity’ in the ‘as-if’ world giving assistance to the focal character in the event. This can be clearly illustrated by a similar activity ‘Charlie and the Chocolate Factory’ used in a lesson plan designed by Oblate Primary School in the book *Language Alive: Teaching English through Process Drama*. In the activity, students forming two rows represent two conflicting inner voices of Charlie after he has found money in the snow. Students take turns to decide and explain in this moral dilemma whether Charlie should keep the money or not, showing both agreement and disagreement. In doing so, students validate their real world identity of being a member of the learning community by investing their ideas, which are grounded on their own moral values in the real world. On the other hand, the contribution of advice in the fictitious world is significant to the learner in that it helps to affirm their character roles in the drama.

Apart from identity-making and self-validation, role-playing also has the effect of conceiving an ideal self or a possible self—the self that learners would like to be. The relevance of these selves to their aspiring or future achievement, which is argued by Arnold and Murphey (2013), can evoke a significant motivational response in L2

learning. These two selves as projected in the ‘as-if’ world are specifically related to the dramatic technique, *mantle of the expert*. In this convention, learners are empowered by assuming responsible roles and making decisions in tackling an invented problem or task. This technique not only increases the learner’s engagement, confidence and creativity, but also provides them with the opportunity to model themselves on the expert role assigned to them which in language learning, as Arnold (2013: 39) claims, ‘helps the learners to release limiting beliefs about their ability and to stimulate the desire to learn the language and plan how best to do so’. This is, in fact, no more different than the case where children or teenagers model themselves on some film stars or business tycoons in developing their future selves. Such an interpretation of agency also sheds light onto the specific manifestations of autonomy, ownership and responsibility which, we argue, the drama-based approach can afford the learners.

5 Interactivity

In this section, we look at how the verbal interaction between participants in the process drama generates meaningful actions in the L2 learning process. The major consideration in this discussion is the learner’s adaptation in the verbal interactions in this drama activity, which is also related to the learning of various discourse and pragmatic principles.

While the totality of participation in the drama production can broadly be interpreted as an adaptive process, we will focus on the dialogue created by the participants in process drama under the premise that it is socially situated, adaptive behaviour, a process ‘of continuously and progressively fitting oneself to one’s environment’ (Atkinson 2010, p. 611). Advocates of the theory of emergentism argue that this adaptive behaviour causes tension and is the ultimate source for L2 learners’ development of their language resources. The following extract from Ellis and Larsen-Freeman (2006: 577) explains how ‘regularities and system arise from the interaction of people, brains, selves, societies and cultures using language in the world.’

‘Our expectations, systematized and automatized by prior experience, provide the thesis, our model of language, and we speak accordingly. If intelligibly and appropriately done, we get one type of social reaction, ... If not, we may get another type of social reaction, one that undermines our confidence, but one that helpfully focuses our attention on what we do not yet know how to do. Through the provision of negative feedback, be it a clarification request or possibly a recast, some dialectic, an antithesis which contradicts or negates our thesis, our model of language, and the tension between the two, being resolved by means of synthesis, promotes the development of language resources.’ (pp. 572-73)

On the other hand, Murphey (2013) regards learning, including L2 learning, as a scaffolding activity in the main. This activity refers to teachers’ adaptation to student needs and local conditions in the learning environment, an attempt to create and interact with students’ zones of proximal development (ZPDs), which is defined as ‘the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers’ (Vygotsky 1978: 86).

Furthermore, he considers that ‘teachers and students had variable abilities to adapt or adjust to partners and situations, displaying variable zones of proximal adjusting or ZPAs’ (Murphey 2013: 173). This proposal matches with the complexity theory as mentioned above and can explain how dramatic performance intensifies engagement, interest and depth in language learning.

One major reason why participants need to be adaptive in conducting dialogue in process drama is that the constraints imposed by the immediate situated context, especially the need to propel the dramatic presentation forward, motivate the learners to make efforts in using the target language appropriately and relevantly. Viewed from another perspective, learners need to exercise their creativity in using the target language to deal with the spontaneity and unpredictability in co-constructing dialogues. This, in effect, also serves to motivate the learning of various discourse and pragmatic principles in conversation such as turn-taking, topic change, speech acts, the cooperative principles and politeness acts.

The adaptive behaviour in dialoguing can in fact be easily identified in the Hong Kong English language classroom when using the drama-integrated approach or role-playing for teaching. These activities may be quite simple but effective, bringing a lot of fun and interest to students while attracting great attention from them. One piece of data we have collected is from a primary school whose students are all Chinese students from Hong Kong learning English as a second language. The students were to stage a performance based on the story ‘Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer’. (Leung Kui Kau Lutheran Primary School, n.d.) They did a lot of preparation work beforehand, such as learning the related vocabulary, listening to Christmas songs and having the teacher tell the story. One major aim of this series of drama-in-English lessons, however, was to raise students’ awareness of the meaning of intonation. The following was the text of four sets of dialogue performed by different pairs of students in order to practise the use of intonation, and the performances were video-recorded.

Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer
Oh! Dialogue

Papa:	Your nose is not only red. It is glowing!
Rudolph:	Oh!
Other reindeer:	Stay away, pity boy! You can’t join us, strange nose!
Rudolph:	Oh!
Santa Claus:	Weather is really bad. I can’t find any houses and people would not have any presents.
Rudolph:	Oh!
Santa Claus:	Ho! Ho !Ho! Merry Christmas.
Citizens:	Oh!

This activity demonstrated that the English teacher was aware of the significance of using dramatic activities to practise the use of intonation in the L2 classroom and in fact, she could also explain to students that the ‘Oh’ in the four different sets of dialogues could be said with different intonation, depending on how the first student in each group interpreted his or her line. The video clip, indeed, showed that the second

students in the first, third and fourth pairs used rather different intonation to speak the ‘Oh’ in responding to the different ways the first students uttered their first sentences. This is very likely due to the variation in contextual meaning being expressed by the first students. If this is the case, it shows that the students were adaptive and creative in using the target language when responding to other interlocutors in dialoguing.

6 Enactment

We consider that enactment is a powerful dramatic feature in enhancing the L2 learner’s consciousness in the learning process. We support our argument by referring to a number of experimental studies that show how the use of gestures and bodily movements heightens the learner’s attention, which results in a better memory of the language items being learned. (See for example Engelkamp & Krumnacker (1980) and Macedonia & Knösche (2011)) We apply these findings to analyse the effect of dramatic techniques and strategies in increasing the learner’s attention and noticing in the learning process. Also, we point out that many pragmatic and phonological features of English, such as deixis, ellipsis and intonation, are sensitive to kinesthetic and gestural expressions.

All dramatic instructions comprise enactment of, or acting out of, some pretend situation. Neuroscientists, such as Macedonia and Knösche (2011: 196), define ‘enactment’ as ‘performing representative gestures during encoding’. Podlozny (2001: 100-1) suggests that there are at least four common forms of enactment:

‘... children can re-create a story or explore a theme through verbal enactment (by creating dialogue while sitting in a circle on the floor), or they can pantomime the actions of a story or theme without using words, engaging in physical enactment only. The enactment can either be performed by the child (what I call ‘self’-enactment) or puppets or other toys can be used (what I call ‘distanced from self’). Finally, enactment can include a combination of any of these four features (verbal action/self/distanced from self/[pantomime]).’

Language items of which enactment may effect a better memory include both concrete and abstract words, as well as verbal phrases. (Engelkamp & Krumnacker, 1980; Macedonia & Knösche 2011) The research experiments by Macedonia & Knösche (2011: 208–9), in studying the impact of enactment on abstract word learning in a foreign language, also demonstrate that even self-invented, or arbitrary, forms of enactment lead to better memory performance. For example, the adverb, *rather*, cannot be illustrated by a representational gesture. But when the symbolic gesture is performed, a sequence of movements is produced, which enriches the word’s representation and possibly leaves a motor trace in the representation of the word. Further examples include words of indexicality (e.g. *here* and *there*) and abstract verbs which cannot be illustrated by a representational gesture (e.g. *come* and *go*; *lend* and *borrow*). Apart from improving memory for words, Macedonia & Knösche (2011) also show that in this experiment enacted items were recruited significantly more often when participants produced new sentences. The reason is that this activity involves different modalities—i.e. different forms of sensation. In descriptive terms, an addition of modalities in enactment will enhance language learning by actualizing and concretizing things.

On the other hand, some neuroscientists suggest that the enactment effect is caused by a motor trace in memory, which is created through the physical action accompanying the word. (Engelkamp & Zimmer, 1984, 1985) The motor trace theory has received support from brain imaging experiments in recent years. (E.g. Eschen et al., 2007; Macedonia, Muller, & Friederici, 2011) Other neuroscientists hold that enactment leads to a complex representation of the word comprising different sensory and motor components. Complexity—not only the motor component—enhances the word's storage in memory. (E.g. Bäckman, Nilsson & Chalom, 1986)

But what is most relevant to the proposal in this paper are studies demonstrating that self-involvement and enhanced attention during gesture production contribute to the enactment effect (Knopf, 1992; Kormi-Nouri, 1995, 2000), and attention modulates learning if subjects produce an action while uttering a word. (Knudsen, 2007; Muzzio, Kentros, & Kandel, 2009)

Based on the research studies mentioned above, we can safely assume that enactment empowers the learner in L2 or foreign language learning, both in memorizing words and enhancing language production. But these improvements seem to be mediated by the prior enhancement of attention or consciousness as suggested by the last set of experiments above.

If enactment alone can help the L2 learner to raise the consciousness for the language items being used, it would be reasonable to guess that going through a process drama or some elaborate drama activities will make this enhancement more effective. On the one hand, enactment in drama activities will be assisted by contextualization, which we have discussed above. The combination of the two actions will certainly enhance consciousness in using the target language. On the other hand, the spontaneous characteristic of process drama also gives further impetus to the raising of consciousness since the learner needs to take risks, make and interpret meanings relevant to the development of the drama.

7 Conclusion

In this paper, we argue that four aspects of process drama, namely contextualization of the 'as if' world, agency, interactivity and enactment, afford L2 (English) learners to construct meaningful actions for a more effective learning process. These meaningful actions involve two essential conditions, *relevance* and *depth*—which are the connection of external experience with student's self-appreciation and higher level of consciousness respectively. Based on the theory of emergentism, we can infer that these meaningful actions are significant in helping L2 learners to gain a deeper or an emergent understanding of the meaning and use of the target language, in this case English. In addition, our proposal for the empowerment dynamic of process drama, which supplements the usual descriptive accounts, gives a more precise and vigorous explanation of the functions of the dramatic strategies and techniques commonly used in the second language classroom.

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A New Generation: Profiling Hong Kong Tertiary English Learners

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Abstract. The new tertiary curriculum in Hong Kong has resulted in the emergence of a new generation of learners who, compared with previous generations, enter university with one year less prior exposure to English. This paper reports a subset of questionnaire findings from a large-scale profiling study which has a particular focus on understanding these new learners' English learning experiences. Questionnaire surveys were administered at the beginning and end of the students' first semester in university. The first looked at their secondary school English learning experiences and the second at their English language experience within the university. Their language needs and exposure to English both in and out of class were investigated because besides academic interaction, university education should include opportunities for social networking. The results provide crucial information for pedagogical development of language support for these learners and a picture of their English language environment.

Keywords: English learning experience, profiling, academic and social interaction, Hong Kong

1 Introduction

The educational reforms leading to a new tertiary curriculum in Hong Kong have been in place for two years, resulting in the emergence of a new generation of learners who commence their tertiary studies one year earlier. Thus, compared with previous generations, they are younger and have had less prior exposure to English. These new learners also undergo a rather different English learning experience by being prepared for the Hong Kong Diploma in Secondary Education, a high-stakes public examination administered for the first time in 2012 and taken by nearly 80,000 candidates each year thereafter (Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2014).

In addition to entering university with rather different English learning experiences, these learners also need to navigate through various learning contexts presented by tertiary institutions which have undergone a wide array of reforms in response to recent changes in the socio-political environment in education. These changes include 'fine-tuning' of language policies in the secondary education sector, an expansion of tertiary places, an increase in global mobility as a result of internationalization initiatives, technological advancement and diversification of learning approaches. These changes will be detailed in the following sections.

1.1 Changes in Language Policies

The current study is contextualized in the post-colonial period. Since the handover of sovereignty in July 1997, there have been several important changes in the language policy in education in Hong Kong (Poon, 2004) including the implementation of the Chinese medium of instruction policy in secondary schools, the later fine-tuning of the policy and the Native English Teacher scheme. The impact of these and similar innovations on the English standards of local students has been widely discussed in the media but the holistic effect on university entrants has not been fully investigated.

1.2 Expansion in Tertiary Places

Opportunities for entry to tertiary education in Hong Kong have increased from 2% before 1994 to about 21% at present (Census and Statistics Department, 2014; Drew & Watkins, 1998; Ho, Watkins, & Kelly, 2001; Kember, 2010). In addition, there has been a diversification of routes into tertiary study. The expansion of sub-degree courses, for example, has provided a popular springboard for university entrance. However, this associate degree route is typically associated with previous poor academic performance which may include English proficiency. This raises concerns for students entering English-medium universities. Almost no data are currently available to gauge the level of proficiency of learners who enter via the new routes.

1.3 Internationalization of Universities

Internationalization has become one of the key strategic plans for universities in Hong Kong as a way of enhancing their global competitiveness. It is realized by boosting student mobility through exchange programmes which ‘swap’ Hong Kong students for foreign students for one or two semesters, and by expanding the recruitment of international students directly into the regular degree programmes of Hong Kong universities. For instance, in the 2013/14 academic year the university within which the current study took place hosted nearly 1,400 exchange students (from about 300 institutions) and had over 9,500 international students enrolled on its full-length programmes of which one-third were undergraduates (University of Hong Kong, 2014). These international students not only bring diversity to the student profiles, but also challenges to pedagogies, particularly English language teaching and learning. While many of them possess native or near-native proficiency, they are not necessarily adept at academic English. Concomitant with the diversified demographics of students is the issue of integration, both academic and social. In this context, a common language, or *lingua franca*, is often needed to facilitate communication. While English is the *de facto* medium adopted for academic communication in the universities of Hong Kong, how such a policy is being enacted by students and academics is unclear and under researched. Even less well explored in previous studies is the role language plays in the social aspect of integration on university campuses.

1.4 Technological Advancement and Diverse Learning Approaches

The popularization of the Internet and other multimedia resources has revolutionized educational experiences and provided new avenues for information transfer; the impact on English teaching and learning cannot be overlooked (Jarvis, 2001; Kekkonen-Moneta & Moneta, 2002; Yuen, 2003). Technological advances have facilitated learning beyond classrooms and have prompted developments in areas such as ‘flipped’ classrooms, self-access learning and the fostering of autonomous learners. This diversity of approaches helps accommodate the diversity of the student body and is consistent with the paradigm shift from teacher-led to learner-centred pedagogies.

2 Relevant Studies

A number of studies have been conducted which are relevant to the research reported here. Littlewood and Liu (1996) conducted a large-scale two-year study to profile students entering universities in Hong Kong. They looked at students’ language competence, English learning experience and their attitudes to English learning and use. Data were collected from senior secondary students, Year 1 university students and teachers through questionnaires, interviews and language tests. This was a very comprehensive profiling of entrants to Hong Kong universities. While this study is still informative today it is dated by the fact that at the time of the study almost every undergraduate student in a Hong Kong university was Cantonese speaking and native to Hong Kong. This situation has changed enormously in the intervening years. The study was also conducted at a time when access to universities was more restricted than today and so, in a sense, was dealing only with an elite group of students. Two smaller-scale and more focused studies looked at the English language support profiles of Hong Kong tertiary students identifying their need for English for Academic Purposes (Evans & Green, 2007) and suggesting that tertiary students recognized the value of EAP instruction in terms of their academic success within the Hong Kong context (Hyland, 1997). While these studies have important points to make about Hong Kong students’ needs for EAP they were not intended to produce a broad profile of students. In a more recent longitudinal study conducted at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Evans & Morrison, 2011a, 2011b), a small group of undergraduate students were followed over three years to discover the English language difficulties they encountered in their academic studies in that English-medium university. Although the group only consisted of 28 students, findings were enhanced by a parallel questionnaire survey with 3,000 students. This study contributes significantly to understanding the language problems that Hong Kong students face in an English-medium learning environment and how they overcome them. However, it places little emphasis on profiling students’ pre-university experience. The study, of which the research reported in this paper is a small part, builds on the above research and hopes to supplement it by broadening the scope of profiling in terms of looking backwards and forwards, as well as looking across a wider range of students (in terms of origins, ethnicities, educational backgrounds and first languages) than has been previously attempted.

3 Methodology and Data

The results reported in this paper are from an on-going profiling study taking place at the University of Hong Kong. The data are from questionnaire surveys at the beginning and end of the first semester of study with 63 first-year freshmen. The first questionnaire focuses on respondents' English learning experience in secondary school. In addition to demographic information, the questionnaire consists of 84 items covering self-perceived English learning needs, preferences and styles, learning and use of English in and out of class and self-perceived levels of proficiency. The second questionnaire consists of 50 items about respondents' experiences of learning and using English in and out of class at HKU and their self-perceived levels of proficiency. Descriptive and inferential statistics (such as dependent sample t-test and Pearson product-moment correlation) were employed to analyse the data.

4 Findings

The following sections cover three main areas of findings: (1) respondents' self-perceived English learning needs and preferences; (2) exposure to English in and out of the classroom; and (3) self-perceived English proficiency. All of the statistical data reported below are based on questionnaire items using a 5-point Likert scale.

4.1 Self-Perceived English Learning Needs and Preferences

It is important for students to understand their own learning so as to know their weaknesses and develop personalized short- and long-term goals within the contexts of their studies and of their future careers. It is equally important for them to know their learning preferences to make appropriate choices of strategies and activities, especially when working beyond the classroom. Understanding students' needs and preferences also facilitates the development of pedagogical materials.

In their perceived needs for learning English (Table 1), respondents leaned towards those generated by academic studies, within both the immediate context (e.g. pursuing university study (4.86) and communicating with professors (4.51)) and longer term such as going abroad for study (4.87). Relatively high motivation for English learning also related to professional purposes such as work after graduation (4.7) and competitiveness in society (4.75). A lower priority was given to learning English for social purposes such as: participating in hall/society activities (3.05), or activities organized by the university (3.71), or activities organized by units outside the university (3.32)). Perhaps students perceive these as peripheral to their academic life.

Among the preferred English learning methods of those respondents who had learned English as a foreign language (Table 2), the most popular was chatting with foreigners (4.59) but they were less interested in learning through emailing them (3.9). Despite advancements in technology, students of the new generation still prefer the traditional methods of learning English reported by Littlewood and Liu (1996), particularly those with high entertainment value, as can be seen from the following

preference ratings: watching English TV channels (4.49), reading books (4.44) watching foreign movies (4.41), reading newspapers or magazines (4.24) and listening to radio/podcast/itunes (4.12). Surprisingly, despite the popularity of the Internet, related methods such as watching clips from YouTube (3.92) and surfing the internet (3.78) were not as highly rated as more traditional methods. The least preferred methods were grammar exercises (3.41) and visiting the English section of the Learning Commons (3.4). A few of them were not aware of the English support services provided in the Learning Commons.

Table 1. Perceived needs for learning English in priority order (N=63). Source: Survey 1.

I need English to...	Mean	S.D.
– go abroad for study	4.87	.38
– pursue my university study	4.86	.35
– increase my competitiveness in society	4.75	.65
– work after graduation	4.70	.59
– understand foreigners and their culture	4.57	.53
– communicate with my professors	4.51	.67
– travel overseas	4.49	.74
– see and understand the word in a different way	4.14	.88
– communicate with my course mates	3.92	.81
– make myself sound more knowledgeable	3.9	1.07
– participate in activities organized by university	3.71	1.02
– surf the internet	3.67	1.02
– participate in activities organized by units outside the university	3.32	1.13
– participate in hall/society activities	3.05 (N=61)	1.01

Table 2. English learning preferences (N=59). Source: Survey 1.

I prefer learning English by...	Mean	S.D.
– chatting with foreigners	4.59	.70
– watching English TV channels	4.49	.75
– reading books	4.44	.77
– watching foreign movies	4.41	.70
– reading newspapers or magazines	4.24	1.04
– listening to radio/podcast/itunes	4.12	.85
– attending classes	4.08	.90
– discussing with my classmates	4.08	.82
– watching clips from YouTube	3.92	.92
– emailing foreigners	3.90 (N=58)	1.02
– participating in group work with others	3.81	.94
– surfing the internet	3.78 (N=58)	.84
– doing grammar exercises	3.41	1.22
– visiting the English section (Zone R) of the Learning Commons	3.40 (N=55)	.91

Other aspects of learning preferences which warrant attention are concerned with the context of English lessons. The items in this section of the questionnaire were deliberately grouped in pairs to determine whether correlations existed between potentially related items, that is, whether a respondent's preference for a particular learning style (e.g. I prefer the teacher tell me the instructions) is matched with a negative rating for the style at the other end of the spectrum (e.g. I prefer learning by participating in activities). It is important to note that the mean scores of these "classroom-based" items (Table 3) fall into a more restricted range than for the generalized learning preferences discussed above (Table 2) and the means tend to be comparatively lower. Negative correlations were found between "I learn more when studying with a group" and "It is more effective if I study on my own" (Pair 2), and between "I feel more comfortable working with group mates with a similar level of proficiency" and "I prefer working with group mates with a higher level of proficiency than myself" (Pair 4). The *p* values indicate that the correlation coefficients for these pairs are statistically significant. Within these pairs the mean scores are similar but the correlations are strongly inverse. This suggests that there are distinct groups of students with diverse preferences for the ways they study and that the respondents are able to articulate those preferences clearly and distinctly. Pair 5 shows that despite the largest difference (0.37) between the mean scores of paired items, the correlation between "I prefer a native speaker to be my English teacher" and "I prefer a bilingual speaker (English and Chinese) to be my teacher" is very low and did not prove to be statistically significant. Such a result implies that those who preferred a native English speaker would not necessarily hold a negative view towards a bilingual speaker and vice versa. This issue of student preferences for a native or bilingual speaker appears to be complex and warrants further investigation.

Table 3. English learning preferences during English lessons (N=59). Source: Survey 1.

During an English lesson...		Mean	S.D.	Pearson Correlation
Pair 1	I prefer the teacher tell me the instructions	4.07	.68	.20
	I prefer learning by participating in activities	4.12	.83	
Pair 2	I learn more when studying with a group	3.66	.98	-.33**
	It is more effective if I study on my own	3.56	1.10	
Pair 3	I learn better when the teacher gives a lecture	3.60 (N=58)	.90	.19
	I learn better if the teacher uses multi-media resources	3.88	1.00	
Pair 4	I feel more comfortable working with group mates with a similar level of proficiency	3.95	.90	-.37**
	I prefer working with group mates with a higher level of proficiency than myself	3.95	.95	
Pair 5	I prefer a native English speaker to be my teacher	4.05	.91	-.16
	I prefer a bilingual (English and Chinese) speaker to be my teacher	3.68	.97	

** *p* < .01

4.2 Exposure to English in and out of the Classroom

The extent and depth of exposure to a target language, including opportunities to learn and practice it, are important contributors to developing competence and confidence with the language. Therefore, in profiling the English learning experience of the new generation of tertiary learners it is important to document this exposure. The study reported here takes a holistic view by considering out-of-class experience as well as the more traditional in-class experience. To gain the broadest picture, participants in the study were asked in the first survey to look back at their pre-university English learning experience and then in the second survey (after completion the university English course) to comment on their exposure to English at the university. Thus, two snapshots were produced which will be described and compared below.

Most striking about the first snapshot which looks back at the school English learning experience (Table 4) is that the mean scores are generally more subdued than those for responses about needs for learning English (Table 1) or preferred methods of learning (Tables 2 and 3), most of which were above a mean score of 4 and none of which were below a mean score of 3. This suggests that many respondents did not consider themselves to be particularly deeply engaged with their English learning experience at school. This apparent relatively modest level of exposure to English may also have been influenced by the medium of instruction of the school.

Despite the highest mean score being for respondents' claims of having been active learners of English at school (3.52) the supporting evidence is not strong. Most items indicating attempts to be proactive or independent as learners, and which are typically practiced as out-of-class activities, fall in the bottom half of the table while the top half is populated by items which seem to relate to teacher- or school-directed activities (with the possible exception of the use of YouTube in English).

Table 4. English learning experience at school (N=59). Source: Survey 1.

During my secondary school life...	Mean	S.D.
– I was an active learner of English.	3.52 (N=58)	1.01
– I watched clips from YouTube mainly in English.	3.51	1.32
– My English teachers used a wide range of resources to teach.	3.45 (N=58)	1.06
– I had a lot of opportunities to use English.	3.49	1.22
– I enjoyed school activities relating to English (e.g. English Day)	3.47	1.15
– I listened to radio/podcast/itunes in English.	3.44	1.11
– I often spoke and listened to English.	3.39	.98
– I exchanged messages (SMS, Whatsapp, Line, etc.) with my friends mainly in English.	3.36	1.31
– I always read the English newspaper/magazine.	3.07	1.08
– I did a lot of grammar exercises.	2.95	1.17
– I emailed my friends mainly in English.	2.93	1.28
– I took part in extra-curricular activities related to improving English.	2.91 (N=58)	1.14
– I constantly chatted with my schoolmates in English.	2.31	1.10

When commenting on their English learning experience in and outside of class at the university (Table 5), respondents expressed strongly their perception of the university as an institution where the medium of instruction is English (4.54) and that the Core University English course (CUE) was applicable to that context (4.19). They also indicated positively that there were many opportunities to use English in their classes (4.11). Although somewhat less highly rated, other aspects related to the use of English around the campus and in class, and to support for English were all scored positively and all but one were rated more highly than any of the items from the first survey which related to their English learning experience at secondary school (Table 4). However, the lowest mean scores in relation to the English learning experience at the university (the bottom three items in Table 5) all concern the use of English within the university context but outside the strictly academic arena. This demonstrates that many respondents were not in favour of using English for communication in contexts which are non-academic (e.g. social gatherings) or even semi-academic (e.g. informal meetings of classmates). Many respondents did not agree that English should be used as a primary language in university residential settings (2.93) and many believed it was not currently used in such settings (2.53), which is consistent with their generally low motivation to learn English for social purposes as mentioned before. The proportion of students who communicated with classmates in English outside the classroom setting was also relatively low (2.65) and contrasts with the mean of those who did communicate mostly in English with classmates while in class (3.35). This distinction between seeing English as an academic *lingua franca* and as a social *lingua franca* is one we will return to later.

Table 5. English learning experience at university (N=59). Source: Survey 2.

Exposure to English in and out of class at HKU...	Mean	S.D.
– English is the medium of instruction of HKU.	4.54	.62
– The skills I learnt from CUE are applicable to my study at HKU.	4.19	.56
– I have a lot of opportunities to use English in my classes at HKU.	4.11	.83
– I am comfortable using English when I need to.	3.89	.79
– I found the CUE out-of-class learning component useful.	3.82 (N=62)	.78
– The signs on campus are mostly written in English.	3.76	.86
– I am given enough help to improve my English.	3.71	.73
– I can find a lot of resources to improve my English.	3.7	.80
– I feel comfortable talking to my friends in English.	3.65	.94
– I mostly communicate with course mates in English in class.	3.35 (N=62)	1.04
– English should be the primary language used in all hall/society activities.	2.93 (N=58)	1.15
– I mostly communicate with course mates in English outside class time.	2.65	1.15
– English is mainly used in hall/society activities.	2.53 (N=53)	.87

Some comparisons within the data sets are instructive. Firstly, it is clear there is a clear distinction between perceived opportunities to use English at school (3.49) and in

the academic settings of the university (4.11). A dependent-samples t-test showed a significant difference ($t = -3.80, p < .01$), and the magnitude of the difference in the means was medium (Cohen's $d = 0.5$). This suggests that participants in the study perceived a real and positive difference in opportunities to use English within the context of the university. Secondly, for a comparison of perceived opportunities to use English in classes at the university (4.11) with whether communication with classmates at the university was mostly in English (3.35), only a weak correlation is found ($r = .354, p < .01$) which suggests that the recognition of the opportunities may not always have translated into making full use of those opportunities, at least not in terms of in-class discussion. Finally, it is worth noting that despite the high level of agreement that English is the medium of instruction within the university (4.54) and that opportunities exist to use English in class at the university (4.11), the correlation between these items is weak and the result is not significant ($r = .17; p = 0.20$).

4.3 Self-Perceived English Proficiencies

Respondents self-assessed their own English proficiency in the four language skills (writing, speaking, listening and reading) in both surveys in order to identify any perceived differences after taking their first university English course. No assumptions were made about potential changes and care was taken with item wording to avoid inadvertently encouraging assumptions among respondents. Indeed, it seems unlikely that changes would be great given the short interval between the two surveys (around 12 weeks) and that the content of the university English course was different from that of school courses. Tables 6 to 9 show the mean scores of proficiency-related items from both questionnaires (i.e. before and after the university English course). It should be noted that although perceived changes in listening and reading proficiency are small, the respondents' perceptions of their proficiency in those skills are generally higher than for writing and speaking. This suggests that students generally feel stronger in receptive skills than productive skills.

Table 6. Perceived changes in English speaking proficiency (N=63). Source: Surveys 1 and 2

Speaking	Mean (1 st)	S.D. (1 st)	Mean (2 nd)	S.D. (2 nd)	Mean difference
Use idioms and colloquial expressions	2.87	1.01	3.14	.95	+0.27*
Deliver an academic presentation	3.43 (N=62)	1.18	3.62	.81	+0.19
Pronounce words correctly	3.78	.89	3.83	.79	+0.15
Participate in in-class discussions	3.97	.74	4.08	.68	+0.11
Express prepared ideas or arguments in class	3.98	.77	4.03	.72	+0.05
Participate in spontaneous speaking	3.65	.88	3.68	.80	+0.03
Raise appropriate questions or comments in class	3.67 (N=61)	.93	3.67	.84	Nil
Respond to comments or questions in class	3.87 (N=62)	.76	3.84	.78	-0.03
Participate in informal conversation	4.13	.91	4.05	.83	-0.08
Use correct grammar	3.53 (N=62)	.88	3.44	.86	-0.09
Communicate successfully (with preparation)	4.05	.75	3.92	.83	-0.13

* $p < .05$

Respondents' self-perceived proficiency in spoken English had risen for six items by the end of the course with differences in pre- and post- means ranging from 0.13 to 0.27 (Table 6). Dependent-samples t-tests indicated that only the item about the use of idioms and colloquial expressions showed a significant rise from the beginning of the semester ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.01$) to the end of the semester ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .95$), $t(59) = -2.424$, $p < .05$, the magnitude of the difference in the means was medium (Cohen's $d = 0.3$). There was a decline in the perceived proficiency in spoken English on four items, although the means differ only within the range 0.03 and 0.13.

Respondents rated their written proficiency higher in five items in the second survey (Table 7), with mean differences ranging between 0.06 and 0.44. Statistically significant differences relate to items about writing assignments with an academic tone and format ($M_{1st} = 3.45$, $SD_{1st} = .97$; $M_{2nd} = 3.89$, $SD_{2nd} = .72$, $p < .01$; Cohen's $d = 0.5$) and citing relevant resources to support the arguments ($M_{1st} = 3.81$, $SD_{1st} = .93$; $M_{2nd} = 3.98$, $SD_{2nd} = .76$, $p < .01$; Cohen's $d = 0.4$). These changes, with a medium magnitude of differences, are strongly consistent with the focus the first-year English course on academic writing and plagiarism. Respondents rated themselves lower in the second survey on communicating thoughts or ideas successfully and using correct grammar. This change was statistically significant. It may relate to a raised awareness of the difficulties of clear communication or that the stakes are higher in a university.

Table 7. Perceived changes in English writing proficiency (N=63). Source: Surveys 1 and 2

Writing	Mean (1 st)	S.D. (1 st)	Mean (2 nd)	S.D. (2 nd)	Mean Difference
Write assignments with an academic tone and format	3.45 (N=62)	.97	3.89	.72	+0.44**
Citing relevant resources to support the arguments	3.58 (N=62)	.93	3.97	.76	+0.39**
Paraphrasing (rewording) ideas	3.81	.88	3.98	.71	+0.17
Organise ideas or arguments coherently in essay-/report-type assignments	3.76 (N=62)	.82	3.82 (N=62)	.76	+0.06
Use idiomatic expressions	3.13	1.01	3.22	.85	+0.09
Use correct vocabulary items	3.84	.87	3.70	.78	-0.14
Use correct grammar	3.87	.92	3.68	.82	-0.19
Communicate your thoughts or ideas successfully	4.10	.69	3.87	.83	-0.23*

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Respondents expressed a general increase in their perceived English listening abilities, with the mean score differences from 0.02 to 0.19 (Table 8). The item related to understanding different accents showed a significant difference ($M_{1st} = 3.52$, $SD_{1st} = .80$; $M_{2nd} = 3.71$, $SD_{2nd} = .96$, $p < .05$), and the magnitude of the difference in the means was medium (Cohen's $d = 0.3$), which could be explained by greater exposure to a variety of accents given the large numbers of international students and faculty members from overseas.

Respondents' perceptions of their proficiency in reading varied slightly between the beginning and end of the semester (Table 9) but none of the changes were statistically significant. There is currently no data to explain why this skill area changed the least although it is under further investigation.

Table 8. Perceived changes in English listening proficiency (N=63). Source: Surveys 1 and 2

Listening	Mean (1 st)	S.D. (1 st)	Mean (2 nd)	S.D. (2 nd)	Mean difference
Understand different accents	3.52 (N=62)	.80	3.71	.96	+0.19*
Understand informal conversation	4.00	.86	4.19	.67	+0.19
Identify key information	4.11	.79	4.19	.67	+0.08
Recognize the less important information in class, e.g. jokes	4.11 (N=61)	.84	4.13	.83	+0.02
Understand spoken English delivered at normal speed	4.29	.68	4.25	.69	-0.04

* $p < .05$

Table 9. Perceived changes in English reading proficiency (N=63). Source: Surveys 1 and 2

Reading	Mean (1 st)	S.D. (1 st)	Mean (2 nd)	S.D. (2 nd)	Mean difference
Guess the meaning of unfamiliar words	3.57	.92	3.83	.85	+0.26
Identify key points/arguments in a text	4.22	.85	4.22	.63	Nil
Identify the relationship among ideas, e.g. main/supporting ideas and examples	4.16	.79	4.14	.67	-0.02
Understand key vocabulary or concepts in various kinds of texts	4.05	.89	3.90	.82	-0.15

5 Conclusion

This paper has looked at tertiary students' perceptions of their English learning proficiency, needs and preferences, and their exposure to English in and outside the classroom. This was done within a framework of two snapshots looking back at the secondary school English learning experience and reflecting on the university experience after one semester (which included their first English course). The paper has identified key points in the group profile of these students. Firstly, they have a very strong concept of their need for English which revolves almost entirely around performing well in their university studies and in their future careers. This concept extends beyond success in assessments and interviews to encompass broader areas of intellectuality and communicative ability. Secondly, despite technological innovations some preferred approaches to language improvement remain unchanged. Thirdly, there is diversity in students' learning preferences and awareness about their own learning styles which will enable them to find their best learning strategies.

This study reveals that respondents perceive themselves as receiving a better English learning experience in the university than at school and that they are engaging, to an extent, with English outside the classroom. However, while accepting English as an academic *lingua franca*, considerable resistance remains to its use as a social *lingua franca*. This will cause difficulties for the continued internationalization of the university.

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Massive Open Online Courses for Language Learning: Opportunities and Challenges from a Pedagogical Perspective

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Abstract. This paper examines, from a pedagogical perspective, the opportunities and challenges for language learning brought forth by massive open online courses (MOOCs). Provided with the capacity to deliver teaching to a vast number of students simultaneously, MOOCs have been regarded as one of the promising directions of education development since it was first introduced in 2008. The present mainstream pedagogy of MOOCs, referred to as the xMOOC model, involves typically provision of short lecture videos and reading materials for self-study, discussion forums mostly for peer-to-peer interaction on course content, and machine-graded quizzes or exams for self-assessment. However, for language learning, which has been conventionally understood as skill development, the effectiveness of the xMOOC model has been questioned.

A study has been conducted to profile the MOOCs for language learning. The profile includes a total of 64 courses selected from the major MOOC platforms. The pedagogy adopted in these courses was analysed according to the types of teaching materials and learning activities. Most of these courses follow the typical approach of xMOOC delivery, with video watching and auto-graded assessment being the most common learning activities. The findings show that, despite the technological advancement in course delivery, current MOOC offerings for language learning do not differ substantially from the conventional distance language learning. Yet, it cannot be gainsaid that the utilisation of computer-assisted language learning technology and the massive student base of MOOCs for creating a virtual social community are the opportunities for developing learners' language proficiency.

Keywords: MOOCs, language learning, pedagogy

1 Introduction

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) refer to the online courses characterised by open access and scalability in student enrolment. Since their emergence in 2008, MOOCs have become all the rage. According to Li, Wong, Chok, and Lee (2014), in 2014 there were more than 60 MOOC platforms worldwide and 12 of them were offering above 100 courses. Coursera, as the most “massive” MOOC platform, offers 984 courses with more than 11,914,000 students.¹

¹ <https://www.coursera.org>, as of 13 March 2015.

The unique learning environment of MOOCs brings forth a potential paradigm shift in teaching and learning. Language learning is no exception. For example, the student-teacher ratio in MOOCs, which can be 10,000:1 or even worse (Nguyen, Piech, Huang, & Guibas, 2014), has changed the practice of language teaching normally accepted in conventional face-to-face or distance learning context.

This paper reports as a preliminary study on the pedagogy of current MOOCs for language learning, in order to reveal the general developments of language teaching in MOOCs. It profiles a representative sample of the language courses available and categorises their characteristics. The discussion will highlight the potential of MOOCs for language learning such as use of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) technology and adoption of innovative pedagogy models to capitalise on the massive student base.

2 Literature Review

2.1 MOOC Pedagogy

MOOCs are featured by their openness and scalability. Most of the courses are open for learners to enrol in for free and have a vast number of students. This makes infeasible many teaching methods commonly used in conventional face-to-face or distance learning contexts. For example, taking into consideration the median number of students, i.e. 33,000 for each MOOC (Kolowich, 2013), it is very difficult for instructors to take care of students' diverse individual needs.

MOOC pedagogy can be typically categorised into xMOOC and cMOOC. xMOOC is commonly described by being driven by the cognitive-behaviourist principles (Rodriguez, 2012). It uses a tutor-centric model and develops one-to-many relationship to reach a massive number of learners (Perifanou & Economides, 2014). cMOOC is based on connectivism, which highlights the importance of peer-to-peer learning, social network diversity, openness, emergent knowledge and interactivity (Perifanou & Economides, 2014). It should be noted that xMOOC and cMOOC are not in a binary distinction. Rather, "each MOOC is profoundly shaped by its designers, teachers, platforms and participants" (Bayne & Ross, 2014, p. 25).

The teaching of MOOCs is characterised by the use of short videos, online forums, and exercises/assessments which are auto-graded and/or peer and self-assessed. As reviewed by Glance, Forsey, and Riley (2013), each of them has its own pedagogical foundation, and "there is no reason to believe that MOOCs are any less effective a learning experience than their face-to-face counterparts" (para. 1). For example, watching of short videos followed by multiple-choice quizzes provide students with an opportunity for retrieval learning (Agarwal, Bain, & Chamberlain, 2012; Karpicke & Roediger, 2007).

2.2 MOOCs for Language Learning

The present MOOC pedagogy raises the question whether MOOC, in its current form, is suitable for language learning. Learning of a language, especially a second language, involves acquisition of the relevant knowledge and skills. A language learner needs to put “into practice an intricate array of receptive, productive and interactive verbal (and non-verbal) functional capabilities, whose role in the overall success of the communicative act is generally considered to be more prominent than that of the formal or organizational elements” (Bárcena & Martín-Monje, 2014, p. 2). One critical success factor of a language MOOC, in this sense, lies in the extent to which students have the opportunities to practice, rather than just understand, memorise and reproduce what they have learnt in the course.

Despite MOOCs having gained increasing attention worldwide, their development for language learning is still in its infancy. Two of the largest MOOC platforms, Coursera and edX, do not include “language” in their course categories at present. Bárcena and Martín-Monje (2014) also found that, there are only five published academic articles related to MOOCs for language learning between 2011 and 2014.

There is thus a need to profile the latest developments of MOOCs for language learning. It will facilitate researchers and practitioners from relevant disciplines to keep themselves abreast on such developments, to identify potential research directions, and to develop effective pedagogy for teaching languages in MOOCs.

3 Methodology

This study investigates how language teaching is delivered in MOOCs. It aims to (1) collect information of MOOCs for language learning, and (2) identify their pedagogical characteristics.

Information of MOOCs was gathered from several sources. The website *MOOC List*² was consulted to generate a list of MOOCs for language learning. To collect the relevant courses which may not be included in *MOOC List*, the top three largest MOOC platforms in terms of the numbers of course provided, namely, Coursera, edX and ALISON, according to the study of Li et al. (2014), were also accessed to search for the language related courses. Each of the courses collected was accessed. Those which were not closely related to language learning or did not allow enrolment were removed. This resulted in a total of 64 relevant MOOCs.

The profiling of the MOOCs was conducted in February 2015. Each of the courses was registered in order to log in to their course pages for collection of relevant information. The following information about each course was collected:

- Platform
- Duration
- Language taught
- Medium of instruction
- Course materials
- Learning activities
- Instructors’ participation in online discussion

² <https://www.mooc-list.com/>

4 A Profile of MOOCs for Language Learning

The collected information was categorised into general information (Section 4.1), course materials and learning activities (Section 4.2) and online discussion (Section 4.3).

4.1 General Information

Table 1 shows the platforms of the MOOCs for language learning and the relevant languages offered. ALISON is the platform offering more than half of the language courses, followed by Udemy, edX, Coursera and OpenupEd. In the languages offered, English is the most popular, followed by Chinese and Spanish.

Table 2. MOOC platforms of the courses and the languages offered

MOOC platforms	Languages (number of courses)										Total	
	English	Chinese	Spanish	French	Russian	German	Arabic	Irish	Italian	Latin language		Swedish
ALISON	18	7	2	3		2	1	1			1	35
Udemy	1	1	2	1	2		1					8
edX	4	1										5
Coursera	2	1				1						4
OpenupEd					2				1	1		4
Stanford OpenEdX	1											1
OpenLearning	1											1
NovoEd	1											1
Open2Study		1										1
FutureLearn	1											1
MOOEC	1											1
iVersity			1									1
Saylor			1									1
Total	30	11	6	4	4	3	2	1	1	1	1	64

Table 2 shows the duration of the courses in terms of their numbers of hours. It appears that platforms have their preferred kinds of course lengths. The courses in ALISON and Udemy are mostly short ones, with only one to a few hours in length. edX and Coursera tend to offer courses spanning a number of weeks. OpenupEd offers two courses of above 200 hours.

Most of the courses use English as the medium of instruction, especially in lecture videos. A few courses use other languages on the course pages. For example, the course “Essentials for English Speeches and Presentation” offered in Coursera uses a lot of Chinese materials to supplement the English notes. There is only one course, “Advanced Spanish Language and Culture” in edX, using entirely Spanish as the medium of instruction.

Table 2. Duration of the courses

MOOC platforms	Duration: hours (number of courses)											Total		
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-45	46-60	61-75		76-90	90+
ALISON	19	11		1	3	1								35
Udemy	3	3	2											8
edX							1	1	1		2			5
Coursera					1	1				1		1		4
OpenupEd											2		2	4
Stanford OpenEdX			1											1
OpenLearning	1													1
NovoEd											1			1
Open2Study					1									1
FutureLearn					1									1
MOOEC										1				1
iVersity										1				1
Saylor										1				1
Total	23	14	3	1	6	2	1	1	1	4	5	1	2	64

4.2 Course Materials and Learning Activities

Fig. 1 illustrates different types of course materials used in the 64 MOOCs for language learning. As a typical feature of MOOCs, videos and text materials are the most common types of teaching materials made available to users. Exercises are not widely provided, implying that many courses may not have follow-up activities (such as chapter review, games, and short questions) after watching videos or reading text materials. Most courses have final assessments but not necessarily assignments or quizzes. It is worth noting that no major differences were found in the kind of exercises, assignments, mid-term quizzes and final assessments across the courses.

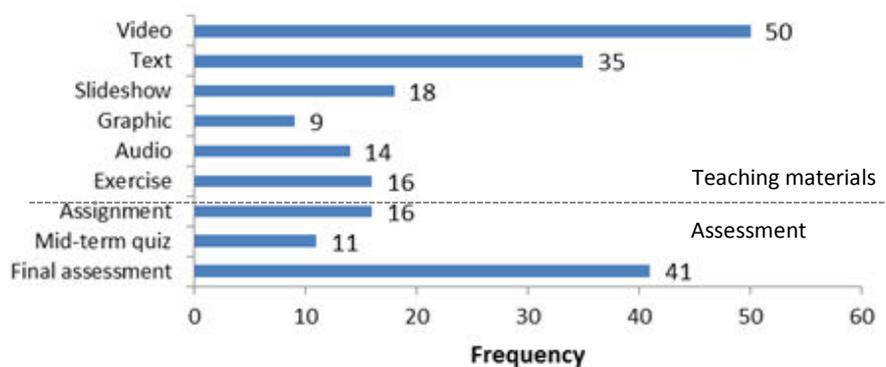
**Fig. 1.** Course provision of 64 MOOCs

Fig. 2 displays the popularity of different learning activities in the 64 MOOCs. In parallel with the broad range of teaching materials, watching videos/slideshows and reading text/graphic materials show high frequency of use. Discussion is also a major type of learning activity. However, activities on writing and speaking are not commonly found in these courses. Students may not have the opportunity to practice after watching, reading, or listening to the teaching materials. Although not widely used, students may involve in peer review of assignments and team tasks such as discussion for generating ideas on assignments. A few courses offer tutoring sessions for students through their online instructors.

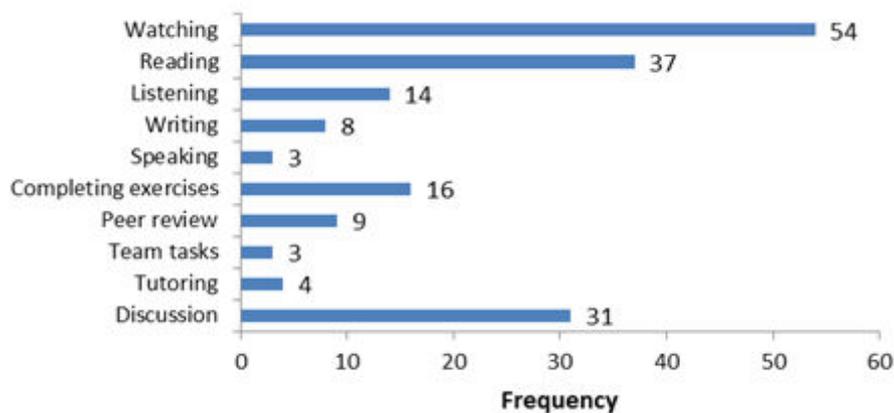


Fig. 2. Learning activities in 64 MOOCs

4.3 Online Discussion

Fig. 3 presents the extent of instructor participation in the discussion forums on the courses. It displays the percentage of discussion threads in which instructors were involved, in the first 30 threads of the discussion forums. Instructors may participate

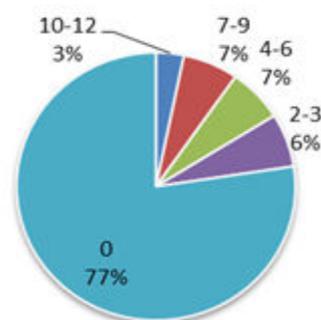


Fig. 3. Instructors' participation in course discussion (percentage of discussion threads in the first 30 threads of discussion forums)

in discussion by creating new posts or responding to the existing topics initiated by students.

The instructors' presence was rare in the discussions. In the 31 courses with discussion forums, 77% did not have any instructors' involvement. The instructors at the most participated in 10–12 discussion threads out of 30. It was also found that the participation of instructors may not be related to teaching, but simply greeting members in the forums, providing technical support or responding to questions concerning course administration.

For many courses, the percentage of the number of discussion threads to the number of students is only around 0.1% or lower. For example, the course “Basic French Language Skills for Everyday Life” in ALISON has 105,318 students enrolled, but only 58 threads in its discussion forum.

5 Discussion

The profiling shows the overall pattern of language teaching in MOOCs. In line with the observation that most MOOCs tend to adopt xMOOC features, e.g. short videos, auto-marked quizzes and peer/self-assessment (Glance et al., 2013), those for language learning, as illustrated above, are no exception. For language learning, however, it is suggested that the connectivist model should be more suitable, as learners may participate in the extensive interaction in negotiation for meaning (Cook, 2015) and for practicing the different language skills acquired in the courses (de Larreta-Azelain, 2014).

The massive student base of MOOCs could serve as a resource to facilitate collaborative language learning. Relevant ideas have been put forward for more than a decade (Bernard et al., 2000; Gruba, 2004). In this study, it was found that only a few courses have such learning activities. For example, students from the course “English Composition I: Achieving Expertise” in Coursera have to form groups and complete a writing project collaboratively. The purpose is to introduce certain features of the cMOOC model into the present practice, for offering students more opportunities of practicing their language skills through engaging in social communication with peers. The online learning environment also facilitates the use of social media tool in learning. Ventura, Bárcena, and Martín-Monje (2014) point out the potential benefits of social feedback on students' written production and their engagement in courses. Sun (2014) also suggests that the use of social technologies could regulate and oversee students' learning progress and directions.

This study reveals how language teachers may capitalise on the unique features of the MOOC environment and available technologies. Current technologies provide opportunities for online teaching. For example, the course “Essentials for English Speeches and Presentations” in Coursera requested students to complete an assignment using a mobile app “英语流利说” which automatically rates students' accuracy in pronunciation through speech recognition technology.

In addition, it has been found that instructors' presence in the courses is not given, fact as evidenced from their inactivity in the discussion forums and the lack of tutoring session in the courses. The lack of facilitation means students' own self-directedness

and the extent to which the design of the course is suitable for individual learners will be important to their learning success. For example, as observed in Kreijnsa, Kirschnerb, and Jochemsb (2003), “one cannot take for granted that participants will socially interact simply because the environment makes it possible” (p. 8).

No major differences were evident between the MOOCs observed and conventional distance language learning. Sun (2014) points out that the difficulties of online language learning may include keeping oneself motivated and self-directed, following the study schedule, socialising, pairing/teaming up with classmates and working collaboratively. Self-regulation of learning has been a challenge to distance language learning (Bernard, de Rubalcava, & St-Pierre, 2000), a breakthrough in this respect is very much needed and the growing popularity of MOOCs call for greater effort in this direction.

6 Conclusion

This paper reports as a preliminary study on the pedagogy of MOOCs for language learning. It has presented the current status of language learning MOOCs by profiling the pedagogical features of available courses. It contributes to addressing the research gap for effective pedagogical practices in online language learning.

The available MOOCs for language learning do not differ in any major way from other disciplines. This raises the question that to what extent students may enhance their language proficiency by going through learning materials (such as videos and reading texts) and completing auto-graded exercises in the courses, without substantial involvement in real practice or language use.

There is potential for MOOCs to advance language learning. The utilisation of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) technologies, which have been around for decades and have resulted in mature applications, is one possible and feasible direction.

The massive student base is another potential area yet to be fully capitalised on. MOOCs may provide students with opportunities for engaging in a real social context for online communication through which they can practice, negotiate for meaning, and develop their language skills. For language education, as this paper has suggested, MOOCs can be an effective means of bringing together language learners, enabling them to learn autonomously and collaboratively.

What MOOCs present, in addition to a vision to bring affordable and accessible education worldwide (Bartholet, 2013), is also an opportunity to conduct educational research and examine their potential use to improve educational delivery (Glance et al., 2013). This study calls for further studies on the pedagogy of MOOCs for effective language learning.

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Hong Kong Chinese in Legal Bilingualism

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Abstract. This paper explores the use of Hong Kong Chinese in legal bilingualism. The first and the second sections introduce the language condition in the society, the third section briefs on the English and Chinese in the legal context, the fourth section finds the definition of Hong Kong Chinese, and the fifth section discusses Hong Kong Chinese and its examples found in laws. It is hoped that the points brought up in this paper can raise attention to the use of Hong Kong Chinese in the local society as well as in the legal profession abstract should summarize the contents of the paper and should contain at least 70 and at most 150 words. It should be set in 9-point font size and should be inset 1.0 cm from the right and left margins. There should be two blank (10-point) lines before and after the abstract. This document is in the required format.

Keywords: Hong Kong Chinese, standard Chinese, legal bilingualism, diaspora language

1 Introduction

Hong Kong is a well-known melting port where various cultures and languages exist at the same time. Due to the historical background, English has taken root in the territory for over a hundred years. Thanks to the hectic financial activities taking place every day in Hong Kong, other languages with their own cultures have also had contacts with the local language, Chinese or more specifically, Hong Kong Chinese. After the handover in 1997, Putonghua has enjoyed a great popularity in the society thus the use of Putonghua words and phrases are encouraged. Such phenomenon has formed the so-called Hong Kong Chinese, as against the Mainland Chinese and Taiwan Chinese.

As the Mainland Chinese is seen to be the Standard Modern Chinese¹ with official status, and the Taiwan Chinese has its political resistance, Hong Kong Chinese is always regarded as a diaspora language². Like the Hong Kong Chinese, diaspora language are categorised as neither fish nor fowl that has received a huge number of

¹ Modern Chinese/Standard Chinese: The phonology is based on the Beijing dialect of Mandarin Chinese. The vocabulary is largely drawn from this group of dialects. The grammar is standardized to the body of modern literary works that define written vernacular Chinese, as in Chen, P. (1999). *Modern Chinese: History and Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

² In the field of sociolinguistics, 'diaspora' refers to a variety of languages used and spoken in a place that such variety has blended with the main stream language resulting in a new form of language.

criticisms about its improper syntax, word choice, rhetoric and style. Chinese linguist Shi (2006) points out that Hong Kong Chinese is a language of mixed codes, vernacular and classical lexis, Cantonese and Putonghua words that stands afar from the Standard Chinese³, the status of Hong Kong Chinese and its language and cultural values are well defined by him. Though Hong Kong Chinese in a way may advocate impure Chinese polluting the standard use of the language, it is undeniable that Hong Kong Chinese embodies local cultures and colloquial language characteristics that echo the fundamental rule of modern vernacular Chinese⁴.

Not only is the use of Hong Kong Chinese found in daily life communications, but also in the legal context for laws have a very close contact with the society and the people thereof. The question is, seldom is there any discussion about the use of Hong Kong Chinese in laws, legislations and other legal contexts. This paper will shed light on the background of legal languages and discuss the features of Chinese in the legal bilingualism in Hong Kong.

2 Background

One may question that Hong Kong is still a monolingual society, as most of the people are very likely to speak and use one language i.e. Cantonese only. However, So (2004) reaffirms that Hong Kong has been having a societal bilingual⁵ identity that two languages are widely used and accepted, although some of the bi-dialectal⁶ citizens in Hong Kong are to be confused as bilingual. Despite the imbalance between Chinese and English, So (1998) describes Hong Kong as a bilingual (diglossia) city and he attributes this to the internationalisation, modernisation and colonisation factors. He believes that the rapid economic development of the English-speaking countries has made their language an important global lingua franca. Lau (1999) points out that Hong Kong converted from an entry port into an international financial centre makes English a necessity in the region.

Several professionals have proposed reasons to account for the bilingualism in Hong Kong. Pennington (1998), Chan (1984) and So (2004) have suggested a number of similar reasons for the presence of bilingualism in Hong Kong, which are summed up succinctly below:

- i. The use of English predominates in governmental administration. However, Chinese⁷ still dominates in daily life communications. These languages of different roles turn Hong Kong into a bilingual society;
- ii. Hong Kong is an international financial centre. Foreign enterprises usually settle down here then transfer their businesses to China. It is then necessary to be

³ Original text: 中英夾雜、半文半白、不粵不標，是遠離漢語規範的一種混雜語文

⁴ Modern vernacular Chinese promotes “write the way you speak” (我手寫我口)

⁵ Societal bilingual: it differs from individual bilingual as it means a person could use two languages but not the whole society, usually happens in monolingual societies.

⁶ Bi-dialectal: people who speak two dialects which belong to the same matrix. For instance, many older people in HK speak Cantonese and one other Chinese dialect (Hakka, Shanghainese etc.) they are categorised as bi-dialectal.

⁷ Chinese: here refers to Cantonese and written Modern Chinese.

- capable of speaking at least two languages in order to run a business in Hong Kong;
- iii. The former British government established English-medium educational institutions and made English a compulsory unit in schools, English is valued and learned in the society; and
- iv. Westernisation spreads through mass media, culturally affects people in Hong Kong in terms of pop culture, language contacts and thoughts.

3 Languages in the Legal Context

The Hong Kong Basic Law does not permit language discrimination. In fact, the courts are allowed to use Chinese, although the common situation in the legal profession is that superiority inheres in the English language that neither the Cantonese nor the Putonghua can compare. English is undoubtedly the primary language of the law in Hong Kong as it is still the major language in the legal profession as it is seen as the unifying lingua franca for inter-lawyer communications, despite the fact that Chinese and Cantonese do exist in some legal practices and lower courts.

The handover underlines the relations between Hong Kong and China as well as the correlation between English and Chinese. Hong Kong is an international financial centre and more specifically a Chinese centre with international features and cultures after 1997. This is a two-side phenomenon: on one side, Hong Kong has to maintain the standard of English in order to have a strong footing in the international market, while on the other side Chinese must be raised to a status which equals to that of the English language so as to serve as the interface for China. This trend will have serial impacts on the legal field, while the law schools in the universities are the first to face the music as they will have to train their law students to be bilingually competent in using both languages when they practise law. It will definitely help balance the power and status of English and Chinese in the future.

It is revealed in the *Legal Education and Training in Hong Kong: Preliminary Review (2001)*⁸ that being bilingual is a definite advantage for local lawyers over their Chinese or European counterparts in opening up the market in the mainland. However, the Commissioner for Official Languages⁹ highlights that the standard of written Chinese (Standard Chinese) has dropped in recent years that many students fail to write in accordance with the formality of Putonghua. This may only be an academic matter. When it comes to real practice the judiciary sees the use of Chinese in courts very sociolinguistically: it is not just a bilingual system but rather the fostering of a culture in the legal profession in which both the official languages can be readily used. The fact is in section 10C(1) of Chapter 1 of the Laws of Hong Kong provides¹⁰:

⁸ Redmond, P., & Roper, C. (Aug 2001). *Legal Education and Training in Hong Kong: Preliminary Review. (Report of the Consultants)*. Hong Kong: The Steering Committee on the Review of Legal Education and Training in Hong Kong.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Department of Justice. (2011). *The Legal System in Hong Kong*. Retrieved Nov 30, 2014 from <http://www.doj.gov.hk/eng/legal/index.htm>

where an expression of the common law is used in the English language text of an Ordinance, and an analogous expression is used in the Chinese language text thereof, the Ordinance shall be construed in accordance with the common law meaning of the expression.

The above text is the gravity of the discussion in this paper. First of all, the judiciary wants the use of Chinese in the law to be readily use which in a way allows the use of Hong Kong Chinese; secondly, requiring the Chinese equivalents to be in consistent with the common law of that expression will simply turn the Chinese to be mere symbols in the most unsophisticated sense of those words (since a legal word may consist of several concepts and perplexing ideas) thus producing local legal terms that cannot not be found elsewhere. More examples will be discussed later.

Although the first case tried in Chinese can be traced back to 1974 (Fig. 1), the judiciary in Hong Kong only published ordinances in English before 1989. In May 1997, the translation of all established legislations were done but than most likely English was still the major language in trial and testimony in Cantonese had all to be translated and transcribed into English. Yet most cases in the High Court are still tried in English, the spread of Chinese in courts will cater for the public interest. The former Secretary of Justice Elsie Leung once said in a speech¹¹ that the wide use of Chinese in the legal field can eliminate language barriers allowing more common people to understand the contents of the laws¹².

¹¹ Speech by the Secretary for Justice, Ms Elsie Leung on "The Continuity of Hong Kong's Legal System" delivered at the Asia Pacific Society, Oxford University in the U.K. on March 4, 2001.

¹² The Judiciary's objective in the use of Chinese in courts is to put in place a bilingual court system in which either English or Chinese can be used. The Judiciary does not push parties and lawyers to use the Chinese language. The responsibility for the proper conduct of a case always remains that of a judge. Before deciding whether the use of the Chinese language is appropriate for a particular case, the judge will consult the parties concerned. The guiding consideration in the choice of languages is to ensure the just and expeditious disposal of a particular case.

Courts	Types of cases	Date on which Chinese could be used
	Accused persons, litigants and witnesses have the right to use whatever language they wish, with interpretation if necessary	Before 1974
	Lawyers and magistrates can use either of the official languages in the Magistracies	1974 onwards
District Court & Lands Tribunal	Civil cases, matrimonial cases, employees' compensation cases, criminal cases and Lands Tribunal cases	16 February 1996
Court of First Instance of the High Court	Appeals from Magistrates' court, Labour Tribunal, Small Claims Tribunal and Obscene Articles Tribunal	1 December 1996
	Appeals from the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board	2 June 1997
	Any other cases including civil and criminal cases	27 June 1997
Court of Appeal of the High Court	Any appeal from the Court of First Instance of the High Court, the District Court and the Lands Tribunal	27 June 1997

Fig. 1 The Use of Chinese in Courts Programme¹³

4 Definition of Hong Kong Chinese

Before discussing the examples of Hong Kong Chinese in the legal context, it is critical to define the concept of *Hong Kong Chinese*. However, Hong Kong Chinese has not been well defined despite the sophisticated studies about the local language. Shi, Shao and Chu (2006) firstly provide a definition for Hong Kong Chinese. They refer Hong Kong Chinese to:

- a) a language that takes Standard Modern Chinese as the base;
- b) it blends in colloquial elements which are deeply influenced by Cantonese and English; and
- c) the variations found in morphology, semantics, syntax, and word choice differentiate Hong Kong Chinese from the Standard Modern Chinese¹⁴

¹³ Provisional Legislative Council. (1997). Information Paper: Use of Chinese in Court. Retrieved Nov 30, 2014 from <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr97-98/english/panels/ajls/papers/aj13104a.htm>

¹⁴ The original text: 以標準中文為主體，帶有部分文言色彩，並且深受粵語和英語的影響，在辭彙系統、詞義理解、結構組合、句式特點以及語言運用等方面跟標準中文有所不同，主要在香港地區普遍使用的漢語書面語。

Putonghua, the Standard Modern Chinese¹⁵, is officially defined, regulated and revised solely by the Chinese Government so there should not be much dispute about the definition. To put it simple, any form of Chinese that is not based on the phonology of the Beijing dialect of Mandarin Chinese, the vocabulary is not drawn from such group of dialects, and the grammar is not in line with the body of modern literary works, then it could be regarded as non-standard Chinese. In the book by Shi, Shao and Chu¹⁶, they put Hong Kong Chinese into three grades as below:

1. Grade A: Standard Chinese, completely identical to the Chinese texts in China that mainland people can understand 95% of the text
2. Grade B: Hong Kong Chinese, in principle it is still standard, just that it is influenced by Cantonese and English thus mainland people can understand 50% to 95% of the text
3. Grade C: Canton Chinese, involving a lot of local Cantonese words and forms that are exclusively found in the Cantonese dialect so mainland people can only understand not more than 50% of the text

Chan (2000) and Chan (2010) both call Hong Kong Chinese a diaspora language (三及弟中文). They attribute such condition to three reasons: the reading habits of Hong Kong people as they are apt to read easy and short articles, the media tend to use non-standard Chinese with local expressions gradually shaping the use of Hong Kong Chinese, and the chaotic language policy in schools.

Shi (2006) lists the three characteristics of Hong Kong Chinese: syntax with obvious influence from English sentence structure, the frequent use of classical Chinese, and new creative Chinese terms only found in Hong Kong. In the following content, examples from the legal context will be provided to discuss the above three characteristics.

5 Hong Kong Chinese in the Legal Context

5.1 Long Sentences

One typical example of Hong Kong Chinese in terms of syntax is the use of long sentences in English is directly adopted into Chinese. The following table briefly gives a picture of the differences between the Chinese and English sentences in contrastive linguistics:

¹⁵ In Chinese: 標準漢語 or 規範漢語

¹⁶ Ibid

Language	Analogy	Remarks
Chinese	Bamboo →paratactic	-covert coherence -contextual meaning -punctuated sentences
English	Tree →hypotactic	-overt coherence -logical meaning -connectives and prepositions

In a nutshell, the Chinese language focuses on the breaking up of sentences and the logic lies covertly in the sentence order and oftentimes the whole picture gets clearer as one reads on, unlike the English language in which the main sentence always carries the idea. The construction of the Chinese language is relatively more rigid, as the analogy of *Bamboo* illustrates, it will be ungrammatical and semantically incorrect to write a lengthy sentence without proper punctuations. For the English language, the coherence is demonstrated by the use of connectives, prepositions and relatives. Therefore, unlike the Chinese language, English sentences can get as long as it needs when connectives are inserted properly. The analogy of *Tree* has it that an English sentence can grow as big as it wants as long as the branches (phrases and clauses) are tied up at the right place with the right connectives. In the same regard, the Chinese language i.e. the *Bamboo*, can only grow in one direction and there is a limit on it.

The following example, taken from a bilingual lease contract, shows how the Chinese version resembles the original text's syntax:

Source text:

The Lessee shall not without the prior written consent of the Lessor create or permit to exist:

- i. any Security Interest over the Equipment or any part thereof or the rights of the Lessee under this Agreement.*

Translated text:

承租人未經出租人事先書面同意不得設定或允許存在：

- i. 對設備或其他任何部分或者承租人在本協議下的權利的任何擔保權益*

English tends to write in long and lengthy sentences while Chinese should be in short and logical chunks as English is a hypotactic language¹⁷ (word→phrase→clause→sentence→paragraph) and Chinese is a paratactic language¹⁸ (logic flow). The above clause is found in general lease contracts that the bilingual texts

¹⁷ Hypotactic language refers to an arrangement of phrases or clauses in a dependent or subordinate relationship

¹⁸ Paratactic language refers to a language that arranges elements one by one, level by level in a sort of fixed pattern and chronological order. Logical connection thus is essential in this language.

are readily printed. The translated text has a very strong translationese¹⁹ as it strictly follows the sentence structure of the English text without considering the usual habit of Chinese. One thing often criticised by the readers is that the legal translations tend to stick to the patterns of punctuations in the English text. For example, “The Lessee shall not without the prior written consent of the Lessor create or permit to exist” is one long heading with no comma and in the Chinese version it is also as lengthy as the source text that goes “承租人未經出租人事先書面同意不得設定或允許存在”. Suggestions are made as below:

Suggestion:

未經出租人事先書面同意，承租人不得：

- i. 對有關設備、或其中任何部分、或承租人在本協議下的權利，允許存在任何抵押權益。

The adding of certain punctuation has helped demonstrate the logic and semantic connection of different parts, though it still has the shadow of the English text. This is a controversial topic in legal translation as to retaining the English structure or adapting to the Chinese way of expression. As most laws were firstly written in English and a lot of legal terms are great challenges to translators, for instance, security interest, which is a complicated concept in property law so cannot be translated too concisely, sometimes there is not much room for re-writing the text in the Standard Chinese way. The status of English in law has made it a sacred language that most Chinese translations are split images of the original text which are still accepted and referred to for over a decade after the handover, giving birth to such Hong Kong Chinese in many legal texts.

The following example is another illustration:

Source text:

The borrower shall not do or cause or suffer anything to be done whereby the lender's interest may be prejudiced.

Translated text:

借款人不得作出或促使或容許任何事情發生藉以使貸款人的利益可能受損。

The translation has no breaking which is more or less the same as the English version. It is suggested to break the source text into several chunks then put them in logical order with the help of punctuation as below:

Suggestion:

借款人不得作出、促使、容許任何可導致貸款人的利益受損的事情。

¹⁹ Translationese: suggested by Eugene Nida, an American linguist and scholar in translation studies, which means a translated text has a strong accent of the source text that it is apparently a translation but not an original text.

5.2 Passive Voice

English has a very distinct tense-aspect-voice system in which verbs play an important role in telling time differences and sequences of actions. The use of passive voice in English is very common which can lay the focus on the action receiver or simply make the tone more formal. However, in Standard Chinese, most actions are expressed in the form of active voice while most passive voice sentences have negative implications, especially the word “被” as many scholars²⁰ have reiterated that such word is only to deal with very negative events in Standard Chinese²¹, for example, “被殺” (being murdered), “被姦” (being raped), “被屈打成招” (being coerced into making a confession) and so on. The following examples are found in some legal texts on website of the Department of Justice:

1. Positive

...cannot be found... (BOILERS AND PRESSURE VESSELS ORDINANCE Chapter 56 2(1)) translated into “...不能被尋獲...”

2. Formal tone

...The Registrar shall not be taken to... (PLANT VARIETIES PROTECTION ORDINANCE Chapter 490 7(1)) translated into “...處長不得被視為...”

3. Neutral

...when his case is called for trial... (CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE chapter 221 5) translated into “...囚犯的案件被傳喚作審訊時...”.

Yet, a lot of passive voice sentences in English are translated into “被” generating a misunderstanding that English passive voice equals to “被” in Hong Kong Chinese. Where in Standard Chinese, there are other alternatives to express passive voice, for instance, “遭”, “挨”, “罹” for negative expressions, “得”, “蒙”, “獲” for positive expressions and “由”, “受”, “告”, “見” for neutral expressions.

5.3 The Use of Classical Chinese Words

Another the characteristic of Hong Kong Chinese is the use of old Chinese words. Shi (2006) says that the classical Chinese words (文言) have become part of Hong Kong Chinese; while Tang, Lai and Kwok (2008) also suggest that many Cantonese words are in fact very ancient and elegant Chinese. For many Hong Kong people, the use of classical Chinese words is very common in their daily life communications that even themselves do not recognise, although Standard Chinese does not suggest the use of classical Chinese words in the modern society. The laws are no exception, here are some examples:

²⁰ 胡裕樹,《現代漢語》,香港:三聯書店,2001年;呂叔湘,《語法學習》,香港:三聯,2008年;雙語法律文件組,《語法相關》。

²¹ For example, 被殺、被強姦、被冤枉 etc.

- i. 此舉違反香港法例
- ii. 則屬例外
- iii. 所有訟費均須准予 〈香港高等法院規則第4A章第62號命令〉

“此”，“則”，“均”，“須” are all function words (虛詞) in Chinese but may be only limited to Hong Kong Chinese since one is very unlikely to find them in Putonghua or in the legal texts in China. These function words have been in the Chinese language for over a thousand years but in Modern Standard Chinese, they are replaced by “這”，“便”，“都”，“要/得(dei3)”. Another example of classical Chinese words is the use of “即使” in Hong Kong legal context. “即使” could be found in use as early as in the Three-Kingdom Period, and until now it is still being used in Hong Kong Chinese especially when translating “notwithstanding” in the law²² (Fig. 2). However, in Putonghua and Standard Chinese, it is said that “即使” is a non-standard expression that it should be replaced by “哪怕”(Tong, 2006)²³.

(1) <u>notwithstanding - 即使</u> 1 3
(2) <u>notwithstanding - notwithstanding ... 即使.....亦然</u> 8 19B(2)
(3) <u>contain - notwithstanding anything contained in 即使.....已有任何規定</u> 50 28D(5)(a)
(4) <u>agreement - notwithstanding any agreement to the contrary 即使有任何相反協議</u> 379 4(1)
(5) <u>contrary - notwithstanding any agreement to the contrary 即使有任何相反協議</u> 379 4(1)
(6) <u>notwithstanding - notwithstanding any rule of law to the contrary 即使任何法律規則有相反的規定</u> 490 33(1)
(7) <u>notwithstanding - notwithstanding anything contained in 即使.....已有任何規定</u> 50 28D(5)(a)
(8) <u>notwithstanding - notwithstanding any agreement to the contrary 即使有任何相反協議</u> 379 4(1)

Fig. 2 Search for “Notwithstanding” on the Website of DoJ

²² Sometimes “notwithstanding” is translated into “儘管”, though such Chinese is also very ancient that one may seldom find in Standard Chinese and Putonghua

²³ 湯志祥，〈廣州話、普通話、上海話6000常用詞對照手冊〉，香港：中華書局，2006年。

5.4 New Terms in Hong Kong Chinese

At times new terms in Chinese are translations of English texts. However, in recent years a number of new vocabulary exist in the legal context is artificially created words, among which some receive acceptability but some only invite disagreements as well as negative comments. One debatable example must be translating “posses” or “possession” into “管有”. Experts in the Chinese language criticise that in Standard Chinese there are only “管理” or “擁有” but not such a term. Tony Yen (2002)²⁴, law draftsman of the Department of Justice, explains that when existing Chinese words cannot express fully what the English texts mean, the law draftmen tended to create new words to fill up the semantic gap. There are more local examples as below:

1. Satisfied: 信納 as from 採信及接納
2. Prove/Apply: 申領 as from 申請及領取
3. Resettlement: 徙置 as from 遷徙及安置
4. Supervise: 監管 as from 監察/檢察及管制
5. Intercept: 截聽 as from 截取及竊聽

As pointed out by Shi, it is not uncommon for Hong Kong Chinese to re-use and add in new meanings to an existing word so as to create a unique term that can only be found in Hong Kong which may mean something totally different in other Chinese speaking areas. For example, the HKSAR government encourages citizens to peruse further studies by using the word “進修增值”, in which “增值” originally refers to property values and financial appreciation; the word “prosecute” is translated into “檢控” while “檢控” in China means “檢驗、控制”²⁵ restricting to the quality of products; the word accountability is translated into “問責” whereas in China it is called “對人民負責”, and many more. All these are examples of artificially created words in Hong Kong Chinese.

6 Conclusion

Hong Kong Chinese in the law may on one hand, be a good reflection of the social conditions which can be easily comprehensible to the locals, while on the other hand when creating and using Hong Kong Chinese, one should bear in mind that some of the words, phrases and sentences are grammatically wrong as against the official Standard Chinese.

In this paper, the social, political and legal status of the three languages, English, Cantonese and Putonghua, has been discussed. Due to the historical background, English has always been the advantageous language in politics and the legal profession as the language was linked up with authority and power by the former British

²⁴ 嚴元浩，〈法律翻譯的歷史使命〉，〈法律翻譯：從實踐出發〉，陸文慧主編，香港：中華書局，2002年。

²⁵ In China “prosecute” is 起訴.

government. Moreover, Cantonese remains the language for identity and major dialect in daily life activities and Putonghua is playing a more important role in the SAR nowadays thanks to the rising up of the financial market in mainland China. All these have equipped Hong Kong with a perfect environment for the three languages to mix and blend, influencing each other thus producing a new language, Hong Kong Chinese.

This paper investigates the use of Hong Kong Chinese in legal bilingualism from a sociolinguistic perspective. It is found out that sociolinguistic conditions would too influence language use thus have impacts on the use of Hong Kong Chinese in the legal context. More discussions can be done on the comparing the Hong Kong Chinese in legal texts with the English original texts so as to examine if there is any linkage between the form of Hong Kong Chinese and ways of translation.

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Sound of Music: Aesthetics of Chinese Poetics in English Translation

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Abstract. Music is, in a general sense, absolutely an essential element in singing and translating classical Chinese poetry into English. In the course of translating, the significance of music lies in the indications of meter and cadence, stressed and unstressed syllables, and rhyming representations. The ‘sounds’ of the music derived from poetry in Chinese may have posed a serious problem for Chinese-to-English translators. Without these sounds of music, poetry does not exist anymore. The comparative rhetoric acts as a good agent to revive the music from Chinese into English, whereas the translator pays attention to consider the different ways of expressing the music between the traditional Chinese and the English settings as well. The art of music is, therefore, always with the aesthetics of the poetics. This paper shows how these sounds could be appropriately and ‘melodiously’ rendered from the traditional Chinese original to English.

Keywords: Music, Chinese poetry, translation, aesthetics

1 Introduction

Classical Chinese poetry has been expressed in English in various ways, and widely practiced by sinologists and translation practitioners in the Chinese literary circle. Various imperial dynasties in China saw a series of impressive classical poetry written in different musical settings and representations, including *shi*-poetry 詩 [poems with strict meter, rhyme, and character limit in lines], *ci*-poetry 詞 [poems with relatively less restriction on meter, rhyme and character limit, and can be sung with music], *qu* 曲 [ballads that were originated from music] and *fu* 賦 [rhapsodies, poems with strict rules regulating the rhythm] etc. Poetic sensation concerns, especially in classical Chinese settings, with allusive and figurative borrowings which are hardly catchable by readers without any background in the Chinese culture and language.

Music of poetics, therefore, is an indispensable element expressed in all kinds of poetry as it is a universal language across different linguistic and cultural settings. Without music, poetry can be considered ‘dead’. In both Western and Chinese poetry, the significance of music lies in the indications of meter, cadence, stressed and unstressed syllables, and rhythmic representations. Another common feature is that poems in many languages are able to be sung, and they are physically songs in the

original settings, resembling the ballad songs by troubadours in the Western poetic tradition.

2 Onomatopoeia and Music in Chinese and English Settings

Although the repertoire of Chinese poetry is in most aspects not readily comprehensible in the Western world, especially in cultural aspects, translation with musical consideration can help much in this regard. It also assists in getting the semantic meanings through by a complicated blending of a poetic product essential of melodious tones with rich endowment of rhetorical features and lexical beauty. In the process of rendering, however, several options have to be applied as long as the ways of compiling music in English and Chinese poetry are never similar.

In writing classical Chinese poetry, poets restrained themselves to using strict stipulations at meters and rhymes to achieve musical beauty emphasized in the poetic tradition. These were sometimes too strict that even literary allusions had to be applied. Intonations with the name *pingze* 平仄 were a significant contributor to the harmonious and melodious sound of poetry. While in English poems, number of syllables, alliterations and rhymes may have contributed more to the musical representations. Sometimes they even seem to appear as modern verse in prosaic form without any regulations governing the musical setting!

With reference to the above, in some cases even those classical Chinese poems which emphasize strict musical setting had been translated into English free verses without much attention paid to musical significance. The music, in this scenario, is thus lost in the translation process. Therefore, it is crucial to note the overall musical impact created by the original poet; the translator may have to be as creative as to be an artist him/herself in taking care of all these musical contributions, to re-create a Chinese way of musical verse as expressed in English, which manifests itself in terms of the Chinese tunes as compared to English syllables; the Chinese rhymes as compared to English ones; as well as the Chinese assonance, alliteration, meter, and onomatopoeia etc.

There are ultimately huge differences between the Chinese and English ways to express the above notions. Chinese classical poetry is usually expressed in the form of regulated numbered lines, usually five or seven characters in a line. The most popular form of poetry in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) was demonstrated as in conventional four or eight poetic lines. Many of them are written with poetic couplets (antithesis), strict rhymes, meters as consolidated by *pingze* mentioned above, and also rich allusions. From this it is obvious that most Chinese poems are subject to stringent musical and onomatopoeic settings.

When rendering poetry from Chinese into English, the features of mimesis, onomatopoeia, sense and aesthetic function are deemed more useful in English poetic formation because images serve as an important medium when compared to the Chinese language that is more unique and neat in character formation, form and sound system. Images could in turn be created through these formats and sounds.

After all, it seems to be a dilemma to identify different idea to translate which produces better results than the other, no matter Chinese or Western. Usually when translating from Chinese into English the level of accessibility of the rendered text

might seem relatively lower, and therefore the readers' interests and understanding towards the meaning of the Chinese poem might be deprived of, subject to the fact that they only receive it out of their own perception of the English language, without either any prior knowledge in both the Chinese language or culture, or any specific attachment to the sentiments derived from the Chinese language and culture. It is ultimately difficult for target readers to adapt to the cultural clash between the two languages.

Certainly, in onomatopoeic terms, assonance, alliteration and syllable stresses may be arranged to serve similar purposes. These alternative ways all make poetry translation more harmonious in terms of melody. It is never easy to strike a balance in translating poetry, but reasonably melodious renderings can always assist. The reliance on rhymes is only to be applied altogether with other rhetorical schemes.

Stylistics of texts are refined and in a way strengthened by the significance pertaining to musical and sound features. As Pollard (1996) correctly points out,

... form (cadence, rhyme, balance, tone) is what makes poetry sing, and in classical Chinese poetry especially, the striking off of form against content gives it its thrill and resonance. Form, though, is impossible to carry across from Chinese to a language as different as English. Its monosyllables, each with its fixed pitch, form patterns that cannot be transferred to a language of long and short syllables and light and heavy stresses. (p. 47)

To have a readily simple display of the stylistic features, Newmark (1988) has emphasized on the significance of aesthetic function as:

[the] language designed to please the senses, firstly through its metaphors. The rhythm, balance and contrasts of sentences, clauses and words also play their part. The sound-effects consists of onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, meter, intonation, stress—some of these play a part in most types of texts.... In translating expressive texts—in particular, poetry—there is often a conflict between the expressive and the aesthetic function ('truth' and 'beauty')—the poles of ugly literal translation and beautiful free translation. (p. 42)

Budd (1995) also points out, "[...] any subtle state of emotion, or nuance or shade of attitude or tone, can be captured in language only by the use of figurative language, meter, rhyme, and so on...." (pp. 84-85) Amongst all these features, rhyme is considered one of the most essential and regular schemes in writing classical Chinese poetry, which provides a foreground for poets to revive poetic meter and create rhythmic onomatopoeia.

Towards rhymes in classical Chinese poetry, which can be expressed in different modes or names as in 'end-rhymes', 'alliterations', 'internal rhymes', 'eye-rhymes' and 'accords'. Although different in names, these rhymes are interrelated to each other and are used in various capacities. *Accords*, or I call 'mimic rhymes', are frequently applied in modern and contemporary poetry for creation of melodious, but not necessarily stringently musical, effects. Strictly speaking, rhyming was deemed crucial as rules of thumb for classical Chinese poetry, and has also been popular in English poems throughout many literary periods.

Turner (1976) expresses the need of employing rhyme, a kind of musical features, into a poem when it is translated from Chinese to English:

Chinese poetry tends strongly to be epigrammatic, and most short Chinese poems are Epigrams. Now if an effective epigram is transformed into prose, it becomes inconsequential. For the point of epigrammatic and antithetical poetry is carried by its rhyme and rhythm.... In an attempt to preserve the singing or musical quality in Chinese, I regularly employ rhyme. (p.11)

3 Sound of Music as a Creative Transformation

There are definitely merits and demerits about whether applying the musical stylistic scheme or not in the translation process. For example, appropriate rhymes and meters can generate concerted efforts in creating solidarity of a series of sounds, and hence cadence of the whole poem. Poems without any musical effects may fabricate a sense of freedom and wit, getting rid of the strict restriction of the austere quatrains. However they may be mistakenly assigned to be regarded as prosaic poems or even plain prose.

Creativity is a vital element for equivalent-effect re-creation in the case of literary translation, whereas the revival of imagery and therefore imagination may well be achieved through various musical features.

We can draw our analyses from various Chinese classical examples that are translated into English in different musical ways and in different settings. An example follows:

Source-language poem:

一剪梅

一片春愁待酒澆。江上舟搖，樓上簾招。
秋娘渡與泰娘橋，風又飄飄，雨又蕭蕭。
何日歸家洗客袍？銀字笙調，心字香燒。
流光容易把人拋，紅了櫻桃，綠了芭蕉。

蔣捷

Translated version:

Can boundless vernal grief be drowned in vernal wine?
My boat's tossed by waves high;
Streamer's of wine shop fly.
The Farewell Ferry and The Beauty's Bridge would pine;
Wind blows from hour to hour;
Rain falls shower by shower;
When may I go home to wash my old robe outworn,
To play on silver lute
And burn the incense mute?
O time and tide will not wait for a man forlorn;
When cherry's red, spring dies,
And green banana sighs. (trans. Xu Yuanchong, in Gu, 2007, pp. 41-42)

The poem was written by a Song Dynasty (960-1279) poet, Jiang Jie 蔣捷 (1245? – 1301?). It is mainly on 'spring sorrow,' a very frequently expressed theme in classical Chinese poetry. He expressed his longings to go home after drifting for a long time outside. Specific strong Chinese elements exist in the original poem, which absolutely

hinder the possibility for readers to understand the lines. Despite all these, the most appealing lines in this poem are perhaps the last two, which the English translation reads “When cherry’s red, spring dies, / And green banana sighs.” The translator has tried his best to rhyme some poetic lines as “spring dies” and “sighs.” The Chinese poet applied the scheme of converting the adjectives (“red” and “green” in the original poem) into verbs. The original lines “紅了櫻桃，綠了芭蕉，” if translated literally, become “Red the cherries, green the bananas.” Certainly, people seldom translate so hyper-literally like that with a normal grammatical sense in English. To better achieve the result a more balanced translation may appear as “So red are the cherries, and so green are the bananas.” To compare the three different styles of rendering, they possess various musical effects, the first one translated by Xu focuses on rhyming techniques. “[D]ies” and “sighs” form a strict rhythmic pattern, but he *did* distort the original meaning to achieve the rhyme. The second suggested target text could keep the original parts of speech, and the stressed and unstressed syllables best contribute to the meter [stressed, unstressed, stressed; stressed, unstressed, stressed] therein. The third one would better produce a parallel structure of a poem. The lines also involve some Chinese cultural elements as the cherries and bananas are all used as metaphors for the flying time, which meaning is not contained on the surface. Therefore in Western contexts it seems well more logical to add some words to explain the underlying meaning in order to achieve a balanced version, such as “When cherries are red and bananas green, / I have noticed the time flies.” Undoubtedly not much effect is thus involved in this change.

In the course of translating classical Chinese poems into English, meter is considered a distinguished element in poetry since it shows intelligence and musical sense of the whole poem. No genre else has such a prominent focus on meters which supplement poetry with the beauty of sounds. If rhyme is important, meter can be even more sophisticated in poetry writing and translation. A simple comparison reveals the different emphases towards possessing rhymes or meters. Two examples below might be able to express the difference:

Source-language poem:

怨情

美人捲珠簾，深坐顰蛾眉。
但見淚痕濕，不知心恨誰。

李白

Translated version 1:

My lady has rolled up the curtains of pearl,
And sits with a frown on her eyebrows apart.
Wet traces of tears can be seen as they curl.
But who know for whom is the grief in her heart?
(trans. W.J.B. Fletcher. Qtd. Lu and Xu, 1990, p. 134)

Translated version 2:

How beautiful she looks, opening the pearly casement,
And how quiet she leans, and how troubled her brow is!
You may see the tears now, bright on her cheek,

But not the man she so bitterly loves.
(trans. Witter Bynner. Qtd. Lu and Xu, 1990, p. 135)

The first translation by Fletcher is a typical and classical rendering of the source text, a five-character short poem. In such four short lines the poet has shown a delicate, not necessarily subtle, complaint about love by a fair lady in her boudoir. The rhymes “pearl” and “curl”, “apart” and “heart” produce both light and harmonious sounds required for a short piece. It is also ‘unwittingly’ melodious, in a jumping meter as shown in “My lady has **rolled up the curtains of pearl**, / And **sits** with a **frown** on her **eyebrows apart**. / Wet **traces of tears** can be **seen** as they **curl**. / But who **know** for **whom** is the **grief** in her **heart**?” [boldfaced words being stressed syllables.] This resembles us of Shakespeare’s iambic pentameter, although not as tidy as it seems. The second translated text does not contain any rhyme and strict meters, therefore there is normally not a problem of distorting the meaning of the original poem under foreseeable circumstances.

For some classical Chinese poems, they never seem easy to be rendered literally, as the way of expressing emotions and sentiments in the Chinese language is quite different from that in English. Music helps a lot in this regard. A very typical and popular example appears below:

Source-language poem:

聲聲慢

李清照

尋尋覓覓，冷冷清清，淒淒慘慘戚戚。乍暖還寒時候，最難將息。三杯兩盞淡酒，怎敵他晚來風急？雁過也，正傷心，卻是舊時相識。滿地黃花堆積，憔悴損，如今有誰堪摘？守著窗兒，獨自怎生得黑？梧桐更兼細雨，到黃昏點點滴滴。這次第，怎一個愁字了得？

Translated version 1:

Sorrow

Li Qingzhao

I pine and peak
And questless seek
Groping and moping to linger and languish
Anon to wander and wonder, glare, stare and start
 Flesh chill'd
 Ghost thrilled
 With grim dart
And keen canker of rankling anguish.

Sudden a gleam
Of fair weather felt
But fled as fast – and ice-cold season stays.
How hard to have these days
In rest or respite, peace or truce.
Sit upon sip of tasteless wine
Is of slight use
To counter or quell
The fierce lash of the evening blast.

The wild geese – see –
 Fly overhead
 Ah, there's the grief
 That's chief – grief beyond bearing,
 Wild fowl far faring
 In days of old you sped
 Bearing my true love's tender thoughts to me.
 Lo, how my lawn is rife with golden blooms
 Of bunched chrysanthemums –
 Weary their heads they bow.
 Who cares to pluck them now?
 While I the casement keep
 Lone, waiting, waiting for night
 And, as the shades fall
 Upon broad leaves, sparse rain-drops drip.
 Ah, such a plight
 Of grief – grief unbearable, unthinkable.
 (trans. John Turner, Qtd. Lu and Xu, 1990, pp. 354-355)

The typical element of this translation is that, the first seven pairs (formed by fourteen characters) of repeated verbs and adjectives in Chinese are outstandingly insightful as they do not appear in complete sentences with predicates. John Turner, the translator, has managed to compile a magnificent rewriting, by using musical elements, to grasp the attention of the native English speaking readers by more than plenty of appealing alliterations [such as “pine” and “peak”; “linger” and “languish”], rhymes [such as “peak” and “seek”; “chill’d” and “thrill’d”], cadences and meters, which would in a way look more than a Western poem that meets the eye. He has used not only verbs and adjectives just as what the original poet had, but also words with all possible parts of speech to make the translated version much more alluring. This can be considered a cultural bridge by the name of, I call, ‘musical stylistics’.

Referring back to other translations of the same poem, rewriting is not that frequently seen. Rather, other translators have tended more to render the exact wordings of the original (with reference to the first seven pairs of repetitions only):

Translated version 2 [Extract]:
To the Melody of “Reduplications, Extended” Li Qingzhao
 Seeking, seeking, searching, searching:
 Chilly, chilly, cheerless, cheerless,
 Dreary, dreary, dismal, dismal, wretched, wretched –
 [...]

(trans. Wilt Idema and Beata Grant. Qtd. Idema and Grant, 2004, p. 226)

Taking reference from this translated version, the musical representation is delicate, and the form has absolutely been adhered to in the translation process, yet it is just like a monotonous string of similar words being grouped together, absolutely without the parallel and climax effect of the original Chinese poem. On the whole, the level of acceptance in the Western world may not be as high as the one translated by Turner. The reasons behind rest with the already established system of poetry in the West, while the prioritized precedence of meaning and poetic aura over form has contributed mostly

to the phenomenon. However, the prevailing musical effect created in Turner's translation may have broken the established rules. The rhymes, alliterations and assonances have been overwhelming through the whole poem, and because of all these factors readers could actually grasp the delicate nuances inside the original and the translated poems. The other translation by Idema and Grant might have created a kind of 'comic' effect which in turn produces a feeling of hyper-literal translation.

4 Conclusion

As seen from the above examples, onomatopoeic effects and settings are universally quintessential to a poem, no matter Western or Chinese, no matter classical or modern ones. The main reason for receptors of language to appreciate poetry is perhaps the sound of music incurred from the different schemas mentioned above. As music is the unbiased international language, poetry could then become unbiased too; not to mention translations of poetry. Ultimately it is never easy to achieve the notion of 'balance' between keeping the musical setting and abandoning it for semantic purposes. The aesthetics of poetics coming up with musical considerations would best be reflected in ways of their intensity, their tones and their poetic forms. Such aspects could actually be manifested through the sound use of music: the *sound* of music.

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On the Semantic Approach to Formulating a Translation Theory and its Implications for Teaching Translation Studies

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Abstract. This article applies Leech's model of seven types of word meaning (1974) to a contrastive study of semantic features of English and Chinese languages and investigates the implications of this approach in the context of teaching translation studies to college students as an academic subject. Leech's theory is introduced when lexical errors made in translations done by eleven bilingual university students in Hong Kong are discussed. The objective of this paper is two-fold: (i) it keeps a record of cross-linguistic influences on these subjects when they expressed themselves in writing from the source language to the target language, and (ii) it also provides empirical evidence that a semantic approach to establishing a translation theory has noteworthy effects on how a novice performs on various tasks that require suppression of linguistic interference and resolution of the conflict between two languages particularly when dissimilarity on the deep semantic structure occurs.

Keywords: word meaning, translation studies, Chinese, English, error analysis

1 Introduction

Earlier literature, dating back to the periods of time spanning c. the 9th century BC—c. the 6th century AD in ancient Greece, suggests that one of the key questions raised in academic circles was whether a translator should adopt a word-for-word approach or a sense-for-sense approach to dealing with texts in his professional life. This had been the subject of a long-standing debate continued right through into the 20th century when more systematic analyses were undertaken by theoreticians in the west. For example, on a semantics-based theory, Larson (1997) argues that the primary mission of a translator is to replace the meaning of a source-language text with that of a target-language text in an undistorted way that is perfectly natural to the untrained eyes/ears of a native speaker. She considers the text in a given language a framework, or essentially a layered surface syntactic structure built by different kinds of words which interrelate and produce a deeper semantic structure. It is important for a translator to know about the generic and specific interrelationships of words in order to attain equivalence in translation across linguistically, culturally and contextually different languages. In that sense, Larson crosses paths with Leech (1974), who proposes that all

words in a human language can be categorized into seven major types: conceptual, connotative, stylistic, affective, reflected, collocative and thematic meaning.

2 The Subjects of the Present Study

Since coming under British rule in 1842, Hong Kong had served as a crossroads between the east and the west. Although at least 95% of the population were ethnically Chinese, English was the only official language until 1974, when the Official Language Ordinance was enacted to make Chinese a secondary official language of the colony. English had been the language of administration, law and education for more than a century. For a city that had been under British administration for one hundred and fifty-five years, today the role of English in Hong Kong is significantly different from that in other Asian countries such as Singapore and India. Unlike those people in other former British colonies, the majority of the population in Hong Kong does not use English as a *lingua franca* for the purpose of daily communication. They speak one and the same language, Cantonese Chinese (henceforth, Chinese), the most widely spoken southern dialect in Mainland China.

One male and ten females, altogether eleven final-year university students majoring in Translation at the University of Hong Kong were randomly chosen as subjects to participate in this study. Of the total number of the subjects, 100% were reported to use Chinese as a home language. An analysis of the language they used most often with friends reveals that Chinese played an important role in daily communication. Those who conversed with their friends in Chinese were comprised of 81.8%, those who conversed in both languages constituted only 18.2%, but none of them spoke English exclusively when they hung out with friends after school. It is also important to note that while 18.2% enjoyed watching variety shows only in Chinese and 27.3% preferred to stay tuned to an English channel, most of them (54.5%) watched television in both English and Chinese.

With respect to their reading languages, 18.2% of the subjects read only in English, 27.3% preferred to read in Chinese and 54.5% enjoyed reading books written in both languages. In addition, among those seven students who had taken the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination, six of them performed satisfactorily in English (Grade C). Proficiency levels in Chinese Language, however, varied across the individual subjects: there were 1 A, 3 Bs, 2 Cs and 1 D.

Table 1. The subjects' Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination Results: English Language and Chinese Language

Value Label	Frequency	Percentage
English Language		
A	0	0
B	1	14.3
C	6	85.7
D	0	0
Fail	0	0
Chinese Language		
A	1	14.3
B	3	42.9
C	2	28.6
D	1	14.3
Fail	0	0

3 Methods

The subjects were asked to do a written translation assignment at home. They were at liberty to choose either a short story in English from *I, Richard* by E. George or one in Chinese from *Zhi Nide Mingzi* 《織你的名字》 by Wei Ya 韋婭. Eight of them chose the English bestseller while the other three subjects preferred to work on a Chinese text. The English/Chinese source text was about twenty pages long; and performance assessment relied solely on the judgments of the two investigators of this present project, and a set of rating rubrics shared between them to determine the subjects' language proficiency.

4 Subjects' Language Usage

This section essentially applies a formal theory of semantics to an analysis of lexical mistakes made by the bilingual subjects on their translation assignments. It is meant to provide a tapestry of examples of how the subjects misused their linguistic skills across different types of meaning within the framework of Leech 1974, which is the theoretical lens used in conducting the present study. Along the lines of his work, seven types of word meaning are distinguished in its broadest sense: conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, stylistic meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning, collocative meaning, and thematic meaning. It is from this semantic perspective that how the subjects applied their linguistic knowledge of English and Chinese to decoding/encoding ideas in the process of translating is shown and the types and causes of language errors in the subjects' translations are studied in detail.

4.1 Decoding/Encoding Incorrect Conceptual Meaning

In semantics, conceptual meaning is also known as denotative, referential or cognitive meaning. It is the kind of mental image in the brain of a speaker/listener that relates the spoken/written form of a word to an idea that he refers to in the real world or the imaginary world. Although all of the human languages share most of the repertoire of concepts, a lexical gap sometimes may occur when an idea does not exist in a particular language. In the present study, we noted that there were cases when conceptual meaning had been misconstrued because a lexical gap was formed in one of the bilingual subjects' lexicons, and consequently the conceptual meaning was expressed in a wrong way in the target-language text. Observe the following example:

- (1) No more long nights alone listening to the creaking floorboards and trying to convince herself it was only the house settling. E. George I, Richard
 不用於漫漫長夜、形單影隻的聽著地板嘎吱作響，而試圖說服自己它只是屋子下陷聲（✖）。

The word “settling” is defined as “(of an object or objects) gradually sink down under its or their own weight: *they listened to the soft ticking and creaking as the house settled.*” (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, 1998, p.1702), which had probably led the subject to come up with an invented compound word “下陷聲” in Chinese. That a house mainly built of wood does “settle” is totally unheard of to the younger generation who grew up in Hong Kong where concrete high-rise apartment buildings are homes to the locals.

The next example is a similar case:

- (2) She could toss this flower into the grave, which would encourage the other mourners to do likewise, and then she would walk off to the waiting limousine. E. George I, Richard
 她可以把這朵花扔進墓中（✖），這樣一來可以鼓勵其它的哀悼者仿效，跟著她便可以悄悄回到正在等候她的豪華轎車（✖）。

While it is common practice in North America for the deceased's living family to toss flowers into a grave at the end of the graveside service, which is a gentler, comforting touch than throwing a handful of dirt atop the coffin, people in Hong Kong adopt a set of entirely different etiquette rules at the funeral. The subject, who was totally unaware that throwing a flower or dirt on a coffin is a somber experience symbolizing a variety of cultural and religious meanings, had come up with a poor choice of words “把這朵花扔進墓中”. Moreover, while the deceased's living family in North America often hires a black limousine to ferry relatives and friends from the funeral home to the cemetery, it is absolutely uncustomary for the surviving family in Hong Kong to rent a limousine and take people to the cemetery. Since the subject in Hong Kong had very different background knowledge from that of a native speaker in North America, she was all at sea when confronted with the word “limousine” in (2). She had translated it faithfully as best she could, but the word “豪華轎車” she chose from the Chinese lexicon obviously was misleading, although it expresses the conceptual meaning of the word “limousine” in the source-language text.

And on several other occasions in the target-language text, the subjects' translations were peppered with overgeneralizations resulting from inherent thinking errors made in processing information as they showed cognitive bias towards some lexemes in the Chinese lexicon, for example,

- (3) 葉蘭蘭要了杯清茶 韋婭《織你的名字》

Ye Lanlan chose a cup of green tea (✖).

“清茶” is a tea taken without milk and sugar, as opposed to “奶茶”, one taken with milk and sugar, which is a kind of drink very popular among Chinese people in Hong Kong. However, the compound word “清茶” in (3) was incorrectly translated into “green tea” in English, a kind of light-colored tea much favored in China and Japan, as opposed to “red tea” or “black tea”—the color of which is a hue deeper than that of “green tea”. While it is a fact that “green tea” is never taken with milk and sugar, it is a far cry from “清茶”.

4.2 Decoding/Encoding Incorrect Connotative Meaning

Connotative meaning is “the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it *refers to*, over and above its purely conceptual content” (Leech, 1974, p. 14). To put it differently, it is the emotions and associations connected to a word in addition to its conceptual meaning that is defined in a dictionary. Consider the following example:

- (4) Through this kinship with the flesh, some of us inclining to it become like wolves, faithless and treacherous and mischievous: some become like lions, savage and bestial and untamed... G. Long (tr.) *The Discourses of Epictetus*

The word “wolf” carries the connotative meaning of “faithless”, “treacherous”, “mischievous” and so on while it is defined conceptually as “a wild carnivorous mammal which is the largest number of the dog family, living and hunting in packs. It is native to both Eurasia and North America, but is much persecuted and has been widely exterminated.” (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English* 1998, p. 2121). Likewise, the word “lion” takes on the connotative meaning of “savage”, “bestial”, “untamed” and so on while it is generally described as “a large tawny-colored cat that lives in prides, found in Africa and NW India. The male has a flowing shaggy mane and takes little part in hunting, which is done cooperatively by the females.” (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English* 1998, p. 1074).

Compared with conceptual meaning, connotative meaning is all prone to vary from society to society. For example,

- (5) Behold, you are beautiful, my love; behold, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves. The Song of Solomon 1.15

我的佳偶，你甚美麗！你甚美麗！你的眼好像鴿子眼。《聖經》
浸、神、紅字版，現代標點和合本

In the English version of the Bible, when a woman's eyes are being compared to a dove's, it is meant to be taken as a compliment, as this kind of bird carries positive connotative meaning such as “gentle”, “kind”, “peaceable”, etc. However, in Hong Kong if a Cantonese speaker describes a person's eyes as those of a dove (白鴿眼), it is very much taken as an insult, since the very same kind of bird conveys the negative connotative meaning of “snobbery” in the vernacular.

Obviously, the connotative meaning of a particular word in the target-language text is not always a carry-over (of the equivalent word) from the source-language text. For example,

- (6) 照片上的她小鳥依人，身邊的丈夫笑容可掬。 韋婭《織你的名字》

In the photo, she was endearing as a little bird (✖) while her husband next to her was radiant with all smiles.

The idiomatic expression “小鳥依人” in Chinese signifies certain positive attributes of the image that an Asian woman projects, which include not only physical characteristics, such as, “petite”, “fragile”, “pretty”, “delicate” but also psychological and social properties, such as, “sweet”, “kind”, “gentle”, “endearing” and of course “in need of patriarchal protection”. In contrast to “小鳥”, the word “(little) bird” in English does not carry all of these attributes, which is readily confirmed if one looks up the entry in *The Longman Dictionary of English Idioms* (1979, pp. 23—24):

Table 2. Connotative meaning of the lexeme “bird”

Idiomatic expression	Connotative meaning
(as) free as a <u>bird</u>	“free”
the <u>bird</u> has flown	“free”
a <u>bird</u> in the hand is worth two in the bush	“captive”
do <u>bird</u>	“captive”
an early <u>bird</u>	“early”
like a <u>bird</u>	“weak”, “fragile”
a little <u>bird</u> told me	“delivering messages”
<u>birds</u> of a feather flock together	“social”
fine feathers make fine <u>birds</u>	“pretty”
kill two <u>birds</u> with one stone	“easily harmed”, “weak”
be (strictly) for the <u>birds</u>	“silly”, “useless”

For this reason, it is inadvisable to translate “小鳥” into “a little bird” in the case of (6), as the expression “little bird” does not take on the connotative meaning of “endearing” in the English lexicon.

The following example provides a further piece of evidence that the bilingual subjects used their literacy skills in a bidirectional way:

- (7) One of his eyes, Douglas saw, was beginning to form a cataract. Jeez, the guy was ancient, a real antique. E. George I, *Richard*

道格拉斯看著蓋尼雙目，只見他其中一隻眼睛已呈現白內障的症狀。心忖：老天，這傢伙已老態畢露，是不折不扣的老古董 (✖)。

The connotative meaning of the word “antique” in this example embraces a putative property that is accepted by all native speakers of English, namely, the state of being old. Such a property, however, cannot be transferred to the meaning of “老古董” in Chinese, which refers to a conservative person who is close-minded and has old-fashioned ideas, irrespective of age. For example,

- (8) 他年紀不大，卻是不折不扣的老古董。

4.3 Decoding/Encoding Incorrect Stylistic Meaning

Stylistic meaning is the lexical information about words in respect of the context where they are used. Leech observes that “we recognize some words or pronunciations as being dialectal, i.e. as telling us something of the geographical or social origin of the speaker; other features of language tell us something of the social relationship between the speaker and hearer: we have a scale of ‘status’ usage, for example, descending from formal and literary English at one end to colloquial, familiar, and eventually slang English at the other.” (p. 16). Since the native speaker of a speech community always makes systematic use of such style variation, the language learner must be sensitive to the use of it in that language, and learns how to follow suit in his speech or writing. In this sub-section, two illustrative examples collected from the subjects’ translated texts from English into Chinese will be discussed, which shows that some of the subjects did not express confidence in being able to perfectly understand slang in English. Slang is one of the nine varieties of stylistic meaning discussed in Leech (1974).

Examine the first example:

- (9) He chose 8.30 as Donna’s death hour, which would give him time to sneak out of the hotline office, drive home, put out her lights, and get back to the hotline before the next shift arrived at nine. E. George I, Richard

他選定八時三十分作為唐娜的死亡時分，而這給他足夠時間從自殺熱線的辦公室溜出來，駕車回家，教她壞肺窒息（✖），再在下一班次的義工于九時來到前返回自殺熱線的辦公室。

“To put out somebody’s lights” is a slang expression, which means “to kill someone”, as in “to put out a light”, “to put out the gas”, etc. Apparently, the subject failed to make sense of it, which resulted in the ill-formed Chinese structure in (9). The very same subject made the similar kind of mistake in the second example:

- (10) He felt remarkably at peace, considering everything. E. George I, Richard

他感到出奇地平靜，設想所有的事情（✖）。

“Considering everything” is a colloquial language form that often occurs in spoken English, when the speaker gives an opinion about something in spite of a remark that he has stated earlier in the conversation. The subject had misconstrued the meaning of it and consequently came up with the wrong expression in her translation.

4.4 Decoding/Encoding Incorrect Affective Meaning

Affective meaning which reflects the positive, negative or neutral feelings of the speaker about somebody or something is often explicitly conveyed through the conceptual, connotative, or stylistic meaning of a word. For example:

- (11) 他很絕情，咬住離婚二字不放，我知道跟他是玩完了。 韋婭
《織你的名字》

He was so firm (✖) about divorce. I knew we were over.

The word “絕情” that reveals the wife’s negative attitude towards her husband was incorrectly translated into “firm” in (11), a word which, more often than not, expresses

approval in the English lexicon, as in “The client hasn’t reached a firm decision on the matter yet.”; “The country needs firm leadership.”; “You need to be firm with her, or she’ll try to take control.”; cf. *The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2000, p. 525).

Two more interesting examples of this kind were found in the findings of this research. The English word “psychic” has a neutral tone that does not express any opinion of its referent. When it first appeared in the source text in English, a subject had translated it into a derogatory term “神婆” in Chinese:

- (12) He had a feeling that Thistle was exactly what she purported to be a psychic. E. George I, Richard
思壯認為靠魂正如她的形象一樣：正正是一個神婆(✖)。

When “psychic” appeared again in the English text later, the subject then changed her mind and chose another word “通靈” from the Chinese vocabulary which was closer to the affective meaning expressed by the word “psychic” in English:

- (13) ... he had seen the small blue building that he’d passed a thousand times before and read PSYCHIC CONSULTATIONS on its hand-painted sign. E. George I, Richard
當中思壯常會經過一座藍色的小房子，上面掛了個手寫的招牌—“通靈(✓)專家”。

This clearly shows that the development of bilinguals sometimes involves an interconnection on the lexical level of the two languages concerned. The subject had made use of her linguistic competence in Chinese to decode the word “psychic” in English and did her work by trial and error, testing two different ways to do the translation in order to find out which one was the best.

4.5 Decoding/Encoding Incorrect Reflected Meaning

Reflected meaning is the meaning which arises in the case of a polysemous word, where one sense of the word is dominated by another sense, most of the time through high word frequency, cf. Leech 1974, p. 19. For example,

- (14) 中學時代裡一個戴著深度啡邊眼鏡的男孩子影子，在她面前晃動。韋嫻《織你的名字》
The shadow (✖) of a high school boy, who wore a pair of brown-framed spectacles with thick glasses, was waving in front of her.

There are two senses listed under the headword “影子” in *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* (1988, p. 832): ① shadow; reflection ② trace; sign; vague impression. Apparently, the subject had chosen the primary sense of the word mistakenly, mainly because of its high frequency in daily communication.

The same kind of mistake was found in the following target-language text,

- (15) The occasional space left at the end of a bookshelf was taken up by photographs. They were clumsily framed, snapshots mostly. E. George I, Richard
書架的末端偶有空位會放上鑲表得很笨重(✖)的照片，主要是些生活小照。

Three senses are listed under the adjective “clumsy” in *The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2000, p. 245): ① moving in an awkward way and tending to break things ② a clumsy object is not easy to use and is often large and heavy ③ said or done carelessly or in a way that is not delicate and sensitive. The predominance of the second one among the three senses stored in the subject’s mental lexicon had induced her to take the wrong pick in the example shown above.

4.6 Decoding/Encoding Incorrect Collocative Meaning

A word may have collocative meaning that is entirely dependent upon the linguistic context where it co-occurs with other words. The subjects found it difficult to predict recurrent word combinations of this kind. As a matter of fact, the collocative meaning of a particular word in the source-language text and that of an equivalent word in the target-language text sometimes did not match up.

As all the subjects in this study speak Chinese as their first language, they had heavily leaned on the lexical knowledge about collocation in their mother-tongue lexicon to do their translations from Chinese into English. For example,

- (16) 她不禁雙眼潮濕了。 韋姪《織你的名字》
...she could not help getting wet in her eyes (✖).

While it is perfectly acceptable to say “her eyes became moist” in English, it simply sounds unnatural to say “to get wet in her eyes”. The strong influence of Chinese lexical knowledge on their writings in English was entirely anticipated. Here is another example of the same kind:

- (17) 門響了一下，不知道誰進門來了。 韋姪《織你的名字》
There was a noise from the door (✖); someone entered the room.

Though the two English words “rap” and “noise” share much common ground in terms of their conceptual meaning (logically speaking, a rap is a kind of noise when someone knocks at the door), only “rap” co-occurs with “door” (for example, “There was a rap on the door.”).

4.7 Decoding/Encoding Incorrect Thematic Meaning

Thematic meaning is a kind of semantic information that is “communicated by the way in which a speaker or writer organizes the message, in terms of ordering, focus, and emphasis” (Leech 1974, pp. 22—23). Compare the structural positions of the word “door” in the following two sentences:

- (18) Someone opened the door.
(19) The door opened.

The speaker puts special emphasis on the word “door” by moving it to the sentence-initial position in (19). Look at a similar example that we collected in this study:

- (20) 這消息令她心煩意亂。 韋姪《織你的名字》
She was agitated by this news (✖).

It can be seen that at the sentential level the bilingual subject might have been able to identify the organizational center of the English syntactic structure as shown in (20) but

she had definitely failed to recognize the thematic position that marks the same prominence in the Chinese translation.

Consider the same kind of contrast of emphasis illustrated by the different structural positions of the word “resolve” in the English sentence and the word “決心” in the Chinese sentence in the following example:

- (21) His resolve was strengthened in the bedroom that evening when his hello kiss to his wife was interrupted by the telephone. E. George *I, Richard*
 當天下午，他回家入臥室親吻妻子之際，卻給電話鈴聲打斷，
他的決心(✖)更加堅定。

5 Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we have given an analytic description of the writing performance of eleven bilingual students on translation tasks crouched within the theoretical framework of Leech (1974), and in doing so, we have also sketched a rough draft version of translation theory based on semantics, since the main objective of translation is to transfer meaning from a source-language text to a target-language text. Our findings have shown that there was a negative consequence of the bidirectional transfer of literacy skills among the subjects. In other words, their lexical knowledge gained in one language did not always serve as a foundation for proficiency enhancement in the other language. The bilingual subjects, who possess two lexicons, did not demonstrate complete mastery of the two languages on the semantic level although they were able to express themselves freely in both spoken/written English and Chinese. We hope that the results of this research have particular relevance for promoting an understanding of translation in its social and cultural contexts as well as teaching translation studies to college students.

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The Power Relations of Males and Females— An Exploration into Gender Differences regarding Apologizing Strategies Adopted by University Students in Hong Kong

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Abstract. This study was carried out to unprecedentedly compare the social power of males and females by examining the gender differences manifested in the apologizing strategies adopted by university students in Hong Kong. Quantitative data was collected from 100 male and 100 female undergraduates studying in *The University of Hong Kong*. Their spontaneous responses elicited in 27 pre-designed socially-differentiated apologetic situations were documented through oral discourse completion test, an open-ended questionnaire consisted of 27 incomplete dialogues. Interviews were conducted afterwards to generate qualitative data so as to assist quantitative analysis. By categorizing the elicited responses into different substantive apologizing strategies, it was found that female respondents tended to use negative apologizing strategies to male apologizees but male respondents tended to use positive apologizing strategies to female apologizees. This implied the possession of higher social power by female locals in apologetic situations theoretically. However, after examining the qualitative data collected from interviews, it was realized that the quantitative results were actually originated from women's powerlessness in society, which heightened the perceptual damage caused by males to females. The "perceived higher social power" possessed by women was therefore found to be ironically induced by their powerless position in this city.

Keywords: language and gender; power relations, apologizing strategies

1 Introduction

One of the concerns of sociolinguistics is to account for the inseparability of language and culture, which brought about researchers' determined effort to examine the inter-relationship between socio-cultural rules and linguistic phenomenon. In the past 50 years, limelight has finally been shone on apologetic patterns of individuals cross-culturally and inter-culturally owing to their significance in demonstrating the effect of social rules on moulding languages (Al-Adaileh, 2007; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Cohen & Olshtain, 1985; Edmondson, 1992; Goffman, 1967; Holmes, 1993; Reiter, 2000; Scher & Darley, 1997; Wouk, 2006; Xiaoyan, 2004). Notwithstanding, no researchers have tried putting a step further by

utilizing their research data in relation to apologetic behavior to explore other societal phenomenon such as the power relations between diversified communities.

Seeing this loophole in the field of sociolinguistics, this study was therefore carried out to unprecedentedly compare the social power of 2 widely-recognized behaviorally-diverging communities, males and females, with reference to the gender differences manifested in apologizing strategies adopted by university students. In the meantime, Hong Kong was selected as the geographical context for the study owing its observable advancement in gender equality and diversity over the past 10 years (Mcferran, 2012; Wassener, 2011). This also brought about the significance of the present study, which serves to re-examine women's social power in comparison to that of their male counterparts as a result of the changing gender ideology in this city.

2 Literature Review

Apology is a “compensatory action to an offense which the speaker is casually involved and is costly to the hearer” (Bergman & Kasper, 1993: 82) since it enables speakers to reveal feelings of remorse, sorrow and regret for their action (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It also allows speakers to re-establish social relationship with the hearers and preserve the equilibrium between the 2 parties (Owen, 1983).

Despite apology is widely perceivable as a means to maintain harmony and stability amongst individuals, it is subjected to culture and conventions of society (Edmondson, 1992; Goffman, 1967; Holmes, 1990; Leech, 1983; Owen, 1983)—one action may appear to be offensive in one culture, but not in another. The cultural specificity of apologetic behavior has implied the worthiness in investigating how it is used between various communities in society, which can be done by firstly categorizing apology into different forms.

2.1 Forms of Apology

According to Goffman (1967), apology can be categorized into 2 main forms, which include verbal and non-verbal ones. The verbal form of apology can then be sub-categorized into ritual and substantive forms (*Figure 1*).

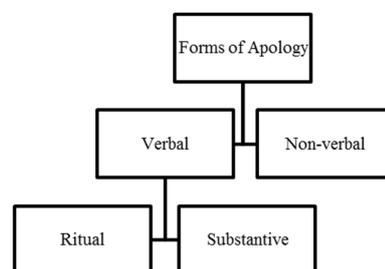


Fig. 2. Forms of Apology (Goffman, 1967)

Non-verbal form of apology involves body language and posture incorporated with apologetic sense. Examples include putting palms together and performing a salaam during the process of speaking. When it comes to verbal form of apology, the ritual form is linked to routinized apologetic behavior performed even the speaker has not caused real damage to the hearer. An example in hand is saying sorry after sneezing in public; however, when the hearer experiences real damage caused by the speaker, the substantive form of apology will be adopted as a compensatory action. Conceivably, much emphasis has been put on this form of apology in sociolinguistic studies, which can be attributable to its close relation to expressions consciously constructed and produced by individuals in accordance to the current conventions of society. Considering the importance of the substantive form of apology, its corresponding apologizing strategies have been classified into various types by different scholars.

2.2 Substantive Apologizing Strategies

It comes as no surprise that differentiation is observable regarding the classification of substantive apologizing strategies by diversified sociolinguists (Al-Adaileh, 2007; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Cohen & Olshtain, 1985; Edmondson, 1992; Goffman, 1967; Holmes, 1993; Reiter, 2000; Scher & Darley, 1997; Wouk, 2006; Xiao-yan, 2004), in that the perception towards apologizing strategies is subjected to personal experiences and cultural constraints, and therefore varies among individuals. It was until an extensive classification system was proposed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in their *Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project* that uniformity among scholars was finally enhanced owing to the project's widely-recognized inclusivity regarding the categorization of apologizing strategies. As more research studies have been done regarding apologizing strategies afterwards, modifications have progressively been made on Blum-Kulka et al. (1989)'s classification system by various scholars. The most advanced version has been suggested by Al-Adaileh (2007), who attempted to incorporate the original apologizing strategies introduced by Bataineh & Bataineh (2006), Reiter (2000) and Wouk (2006) into the classification system. This brought about 12 types of apologizing strategies in total (Al-Adaileh, 2007) (*Table 1*):

Table 3. The Classification of Apologizing Strategies.

1. Use of direct indicating device	"I am sorry."/ "Excuse me."
2. Taking on responsibility	"I shouldn't have done that."
3. Offering explanation	"I forgot doing it yesterday, so I can't hand it in."
4. Offering repair	"I will buy you another one."
5. Expressing concern for the hearer	"Are you alright?"
6. Promising for forbearance	"Next time I will play less and work harder."
7. Proverbs	"Goes around, comes around."
8. Self-punishment	"I will kneel here until you forgive me."
9. Reassuring the offended party	"I promise this won't happen again."

10. Blaming the victim	“It wouldn’t have happened if you hadn’t come.”
11. Attributing the offense to external causes	“I am late since there was traffic congestion.”
12. Minimizing the severity of the offense	“Come on! It’s just a piece of paper!”

It is observable that *blaming the victim*, *attributing the offense to external causes* and *minimizing the severity of the offense* are regarded as negative apologizing strategies since they downplay the apologizer’s feelings of regret and self-blame. They are considered to be apologizing strategies since they enable the speakers to devalue their perceivable guilt, therefore allow the speakers to obtain forgiveness from the hearer with less effort (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

With a classification system encompassing a high degree of comprehensiveness, sociolinguists were finally able to investigate the factors contributing to the choice of substantive apologizing strategies amongst individuals.

2.3 Factors Affecting the Choice of Substantive Apologizing Strategies

There are 4 factors governing the choice of substantive apologizing strategies, including (a) **social distance**, (b) **relative familiarity between the interactants**, (c) **the severity of the offense** and (d) **social power**:

(a) **Social distance**—it involves the degree of separation between groups of people due to societal factors such as social class, race and culture. It was found that people of lower social status tended to use wider range of positive apologizing strategies to people of higher social status (Galinsky, Gruenfeld & Magee, 2003);

(b) **Relative familiarity between the interactants**—it is related to the level of familiarity between the interactants. Statistics demonstrated that the more individuals know each other, the narrower the range of positive apologizing strategies would be employed by the speaker, which is attributable to the association of apology to formality (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Galinsky, Gruenfeld & Magee, 2003). In other words, individuals tend to simplify their apology to the familiarized people for the sake of minimizing the sense of formality embedded in their relationship;

(c) **The severity of the offense**—it refers to the seriousness of the offence and level of damage caused. Incontrovertibly, the seriousness of the offense is directly proportional to the range of both positive and negative apologizing strategies adopted by the apologizers in order to facilitate the compensatory effect and minimize their perceivable guilt (Fast, Gruenfeld, Sivanathan, & Galinsky, 2009).

(d) **Social power**—it concerns an individual’s capacity to manipulate the behavior of others. It was found that the higher the social power of the apologizers, the higher tendency for them to employ negative apologizing strategies than positive ones (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Galinsky, Gruenfeld & Magee, 2003; Keltner, Gruenfeld & Anderson, 2003). This is originated from positive apologizing strategies’ association with weakness and incompetence (Risen & Gilovich, 2007), which usually result in mistakes and harm.

Bright light will be shed on the final factor, i.e. social power, since this paper aims to compare the social power of males and females in Hong Kong with reference to their apologizing strategies used. Further elaboration concerning social power’s influence on

apologizing strategies is therefore indispensable. However, specific studies pointing towards this topic have been found to be rare in the field of sociolinguistics. It appears that focus should inevitably be shifted to the domain of psychology.

2.4 Social Power's Effect on Apologizing Strategies (Psychological Studies)

By referring to psychological studies, it was found that the possession of higher social power brought about lower frequency of using positive apologizing strategies (Keltner, Gruenfeld & Anderson, 2003) but higher inclination to adopting negative apologizing strategies (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Galinsky, Gruenfeld & Magee, 2003). Apologizer's lack of sincerity would also be noticeable during the process of apologizing (Fast et al., 2009).

Fundamental to the orientation of powerful individuals' apologetic behavior are 2 reasons, with the association of weakness to positive apologizing strategies more significant (Risen & Gilovich, 2007). During the process of using positive apologizing strategies, speakers have to admit they are the origination of mistakes due to their incompetence, which disrupts "the existing patriarchy of social power" (Pixton, 2011:103). As a result, individuals possessing higher social power are more reluctant to use positive apologizing strategies for the sake of maintaining the power patriarchy.

The other reason is related to the apologizer's fear of rejection (Okumura & Wei, 2000). It is understandable since the outcome of apologetic behavior may not be favorable, and the speaker has to bear the risk of un-forgiveness by the apologizee. For powerful individuals whose perceivable power is already lessened during the process of apologizing, their power would be further downgraded if their apology is not accepted by the hearer (Murray, Holmes & Griffin, 2000). These 2 reasons have contributed significantly to the powerful individuals' orientation to adopt negative apologizing strategies than positive ones.

After yielding insights into social power's influence on apologizing strategies with psychological studies, focus will be shifted back to the sociolinguistic field to examine how the apologetic behavior of males and females was compared linguistically. The underlying reasons concerning the deficiency of studies investigating social power's influence on apologizing strategies adopted by males and females will also be explored.

2.5 The Apologetic Behavior of Males and Females (Sociolinguistic Studies)

There were a few studies investigating gender differences concerning apologetic behavior (Al-Adaileh, 2007; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Scher & Darley, 1997; Xiaoyan, 2004). The most sophisticated ones were conducted by Al-Adaileh (2007) and Bataineh & Bataineh (2006). Both of which involved the use of discourse completion test and interviews to examine the way Jordanian men and women apologized and explored gender differences in terms of their apologetic behavior.

It was found that females tended to *use direct indicating device* more frequently than males, who inclined to *offer repair* to the apologizees more often (Al-Adaileh, 2007; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006). This was originated from females' affective nature of

offering verbal care to others and males' tendency to attribute more value to action than words (Al-Adaileh, 2007; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006).

Nevertheless, the situation was different when males were in face of females of higher status (i.e. social distance between apologizer and apologizee increased), since they were reported to *use direct indicating device* more frequently. In contrast, when females were facing males of higher status, their frequency of using the strategy did not exhibit significant change (Al-Adaileh, 2007). The underlying reason was originated from males' perception that females of higher status were more sensitive and small-minded than females of lower status. Thus males would apologize explicitly more often to their female bosses and professors (Al-Adaileh, 2007).

2.6 Inspiration from the Sociolinguistic Studies

Despite the studies of Al-Adaileh (2007) and Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) offered in-depth understanding concerning the apologetic behavior of Jordanian males and females, they failed to provide a clear picture concerning their power relations in Jordanian society. This is because **the social distance between the apologizer and apologizee was not controlled in their studies**—although both social distance and social power are factors affecting the choice of substantive apologizing strategies (Section 2.3), their inter-relationship is far from negligible, in that **social power is significantly affected by social distance, but not necessarily vice versa** (Figure 2). For example, it is in all likelihood that an employer's social power is more than that of his/her employee due to the difference in their social status; however, the employee might have more social power than his/her colleagues due to other reasons (e.g. his/her personal charisma) despite they are on the same social status.

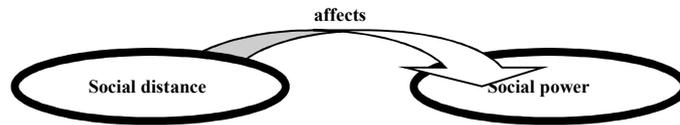


Fig. 2. The Inter-relationship of Social Distance and Social Power.

In view of the inter-relationship of social distance and social power, it is conceivable that comparison between the social power of males and females regarding their apologetic behavior is only plausible when **social distance is controlled consistently in the study**.

In conclusion, considering the comprehensiveness of Al-Adaileh (2007)'s and Bataineh & Bataineh (2006)'s studies, it is perceivable that the methodology adopted in their studies is of high referential value to investigate the power relations of males and females regarding their apologetic behavior in Hong Kong. Notwithstanding, with reference to their absence of control regarding the social distance factor, their quantitative instrumentation, i.e. the questionnaire, has to be re-constructed to maintain the social distance between the interactants and ensure the suitability of the questions under the context of Hong Kong.

3 Methodology

With reference to the studies of Al-Adaileh (2007) and Bataineh & Bataineh (2006), dual-method approach, which involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, was adopted. For quantitative instrumentation, oral discourse completion test was employed as data elicitation technique. In the meantime, interviews were conducted for the sake of yielding qualitative data. This will be discussed in detail in this section.

3.1 Quantitative Instrument—Oral Discourse Completion Test

Oral discourse completion test, a kind of open-ended questionnaire, was adopted to elicit quantitative data, in that participants of the study would be asked to orally respond to 27 incomplete dialogues. Their responses would firstly be audio-recorded, and transformed into written-forms afterwards. This was to ensure the spontaneity of their reaction to the pre-designed situations and therefore enhance the authenticity of the elicited data. Finally, the written response would be categorized into different substantive apologizing strategies summarized by Al-Adaileh (2007) (*Section 2.2*).

The 27 incomplete dialogues were of various socially-differentiated apologetic situations, all of which were designed to have taken place under the setting stated at the beginning of the questionnaire (*Appendix I & II*):

One day you buy a tea set in one of the school canteens. It includes a sandwich and a cup of coffee. The items have been put on tray. Since the tray is really light in weight, you carry the tray with one hand while using the other hand to send Whatsapp messages to your friend on your smart phone. You walk to the seats in the canteen, but you do not pay attention to the things in front of you.

With the setting designed, the severity of the offense could be varied across 3 situations. It is noteworthy that the setting and situations were all designed to have taken place under the context of university so as to generate a stronger sense of relation to participants' daily lives:

Situation 1 (Little Offense):

You crush on a person who is walking towards you. Luckily, the items on tray stay still. You look up and find that the person you crush on does not have anything in his/her hands, and he/she is not talking to anybody. You just have no idea while he/she is not able to see you coming.

Situation 2 (Mild Offense):

You crush on the student. Everything is the same as Situation 1. The only difference is that the cup of coffee falls upside down because of the crush. Coffee splashes all over the student's outfit. Luckily, the coffee is not hot at all.

Situation 3 (Serious Offense):

You crush on the student. Everything is the same as Situation 1 and 2. But this time, the cup of coffee is extremely hot (you can tell from the steam coming out from the cup). You can even notice steam emerging from the student's outfit after the coffee has splashed on him/her.

In each situation, the social distance of the apologizer and apologizee was controlled by supposing they were undergraduates of the same university, and assuming they possessed the same social status, social class, race and culture. However, their relative familiarity and gender were designed to vary across situations. For relative familiarity, the apologizer and apologizee were supposed to be (1) *strangers*, (2) *classmates*, (3) *friends*, (4) *close friends* and (5) *intimate partners*; for gender, the questions were designed to have (1) *male apologizing to male*, (2) *male apologizing to female*, (3) *female apologizing to male* and (4) *female apologizing to female*. As a result, there were 10 dialogues to be filled in for each offense theoretically (Figure 3).

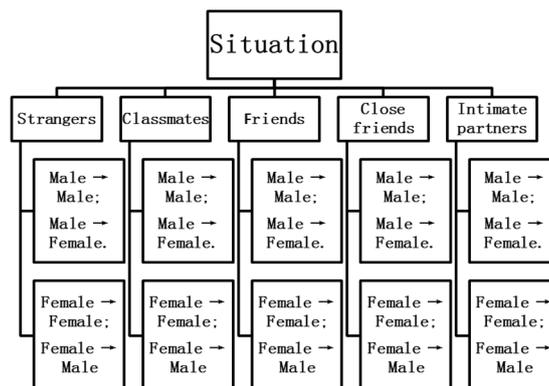


Fig. 3. The Structure of Questions in the Questionnaire

But realistically, there were only 9 dialogues to be filled in by participants for each offense, in that they only needed to choose either apologizing to males or females for *intimate partners*. It should be noted that participants were required to state the gender of their *intimate partners* in the questionnaire since possible presence of homosexuality within the respondents could not be totally eliminated. It was found that 2 respondents indicated their homogeneous sexual inclination, thus their answers under *intimate partners* were observable to be *male apologizing to male* and *female apologizing to female*. Since this study's focus was on comparing the power relations of males and females regarding their apologetic behavior, the interaction between males and females under *intimate partners* had to be guaranteed. In view of this reason, plus these 2 respondents' low proportion in the pool of participants (2 out of 200), their questionnaires were therefore discarded to ensure the reliability and applicability of the data elicited.

After the questionnaire was designed, it was pilot-tested with 10 participants (5 males and 5 females) to ensure the comprehensibility and suitability of the questions. Discussions were conducted with the involved participants afterwards. Apparently, no problem was noticeable throughout the questionnaire. Since no modification was found to be necessary, the questionnaire was confidently distributed to other participants.

3.2 The Participants

Including those participated in pilot test, there were altogether 200 participants in the study, half of them were males and half of them were females. All of which were full-time undergraduates (Year 1 to 4) studying in various departments of *The University of Hong Kong*. The participants' age variation (18 to 23 years old) and their diversified socio-economic background have provided a fair representation of young people in Hong Kong.

Before the questionnaires were distributed, instructions had been given to the participants thoroughly. The presence of researcher was maintained throughout the process to ensure proper handling of participants' questions as well as minimization of disruption and distraction of the participants.

3.3 Qualitative Instrument—Interviews

After quantitative data was collected, qualitative instrument, i.e. interviews, were conducted for extra data elicitation. 6 students were randomly chosen from the pool of respondents to participate in the interviews, in which 3 of them were males and 3 of them were females. Questions were designed with reference to the quantitative data collected concerning the situation of little offense, mild offense and serious offense (*Appendix III*).

Qualitative instrument was indispensable since people's socio-cultural values might be different from the way they operationalize them in their daily usage (Bryman, 1989). Only by conducting interviews could the participants be allowed to justify the responses they provided. A closer look could also be taken at their perception of apology and the

reasons underlying their selection of apologizing strategies. Quantitative analysis could therefore be facilitated by qualitative data.

4 Findings

After all questionnaires were distributed and collected successfully, the responses elicited regarding little offense, mild offense and serious offense were categorized into various substantive apologizing strategies (Al-Adaileh, 2007). In total, 7 strategies were employed by the respondents (Table 2), while most of which were combined and put to use in cooperation. In other words, multiple apologizing strategies might have been adopted simultaneously by 1 respondent in response to each apologetic situation.

Table 2. Examples of Each Apologizing Strategy Used.

Apologizing Strategies	Examples	Translations
<i>Use of direct indicating device</i>	“Sorry 呀。”	“Sorry.”
	“唔好意思呀。”	“Excuse me.”
	“真係好對唔住呀。”	“I am really sorry about this.”
<i>Taking on responsibility</i>	“死喇，搞到你成身都係添。”	“I have spilled the coffee all over you.”
	“最衰都係我啦。”	“It is all my fault.”
	“係我唔好嘅，搞到你咁。”	“It is my mistake to have made you become like this.”
<i>Offering Explanation</i>	“我掛住玩手機，無為意你喺我前面添。”	“I only focused on my phone, so I did not pay attention to you in front of me.”
	“我掛住覆 Whatsapp。”	“I only focused on replying Whatsapp messages.”
	“我靜係望手機。”	“I only looked at my phone.”
<i>Offering repair</i>	“我俾包紙巾你。”	“Here is a pack of tissue.”
	“不如我陪你去廁所洗洗佢?”	“How about I accompany you to the toilet and wash the stain off?”
	“不如我上 hall 擺件衫俾你換丫?”	“How about I get an outfit from my dorm so that you can get change?”
<i>Expressing concern for the hearer</i>	“你無事丫嘛?”	“Are you alright?”
	“有無撞親你呀?”	“Have I hurt you?”
	“你一陣仲洗唔洗上堂?”	“Will there be any more lessons for you today?”
<i>Blaming the victim</i>	“乜你見唔到我嘅咩?”	“How come you cannot see me?”
	“你對眼生喺屎忽度?”	“Your eyes are on your butt?”
	“你盲㗎?”	“Are you blind?”
<i>Minimizing the severity of the offense</i>	“好彩杯咖啡唔熱姐。”	“Luckily the coffee is not hot.”
	“放心啦，咖啡黎姐，洗得甩嘅。”	“No worries, it’s just coffee, it can be washed off.”
	“無事無事，唔熱嘅。”	“The coffee is not hot. No big deal.”

4.1 Data Concerning Little Offense

All data elicited concerning little offense has been summarized in a table (*Appendix IV*). It is noticeable that only 4 apologizing strategies were used by the respondents regarding little offense, including (a) **use of direct indicating device**, (b) **taking on responsibility**, (c) **expressing concern for the hearer** and (d) **blaming the victim**. Bar-charts have been constructed for each strategy by referring to the percentage of male and female users against relative familiarity of the interactants (*Figure a to g, Appendix VII*).

It is observable that from *strangers* to *close friends*, all respondents tended to **use direct indicating device** and **express concern** to females irrespective of their relative familiarity. While no female respondents were reported to **take on responsibility** at all, male respondents **took on responsibility** in face of female apologizees only. Furthermore, all respondents tended to **blame** male apologizees more than female apologizees, and the phenomenon is especially prominent regarding the responses given by male respondents. It can also be noticed that as relative familiarity between the interactants increased, the percentage of respondents using strategies (a), (b) and (c) decreased, while those using (d) increased.

4.2 Data Concerning Mild Offense

Similar to little offense, the responses elicited regarding mild offense were categorized into various apologizing strategies (Al-Adaileh, 2007) (*Appendix V*). It is noticeable that 7 apologizing strategies were used by the respondents regarding mild offense, including (a) **use of direct indicating device**, (b) **taking on responsibility**, (c) **offering explanation**, (d) **offering repair**, (e) **expressing concern for the hearer**, (f) **blaming the victim** and (g) **minimizing the severity of the offense**.

Seeing the bar-charts compiled basing on the data collected regarding each strategy (*Figure i & r, Appendix VIII*), it is observable that from *strangers* to *close friends*, all respondents tended to **use direct indicating device** to female apologizees but **minimize the severity of the offense** and **blame the victim** in face of male apologizees irrespective of their relative familiarity. Meanwhile, all respondents' **took on responsibility** and **offered repair** when the apologizees were *strangers* and their *classmates*. For *friends* and *close friends*, the respondents tended to **take on responsibility** and **offered repair** to females more than males. It can also be seen that as relative familiarity between the interactants increased, the percentage of respondents using (a), (b) and (d) decreased, while those using (f) and (g) increased.

4.3 Data Concerning Intimate Partners

Looking at *Figure a to r* in *Appendix VII* and *VIII*, it has been found that all respondents' apologetic behaviors demonstrated drastic change when the apologizees altered from *close friends* to *intimate partners*. In order to investigate this phenomenon more closely, bar-charts have been constructed specially for *intimate partners*, which show the percentage of male and female respondents using various apologizing strategies

when they were facing their *intimate partners* in the situation of little offense (*Figure h, Appendix VII*) and mild offense (*Figure s, Appendix VIII*).

Summarizing the data shown in the bar-charts, it can be seen that more male respondents *used direct indicating device, took on responsibility, expressed concern to the hearer* and *offered repair* to their *intimate partners* than female respondents. In the meantime, the percentage of female respondents *blaming the victim* and *minimizing the severity of the offense* has been found to outweigh that of the male respondents.

4.4 Data Concerning Serious Offense

Similar to little and mild offense, the responses elicited regarding serious offense was categorized into various substantive apologizing strategies (Al-Adaileh, 2007) (*Appendix VI*). It is noticeable that 6 apologizing strategies were employed by the respondents regarding serious offense, including (a) *use of direct indicating device*, (b) *taking on responsibility*, (c) *offering explanation*, (d) *offering repair*, (e) *expressing concern for the hearer* and (f) *blaming the victim*. However, attention has only been drawn to the final strategy, i.e. *blaming the victim*. This is because no gender differences can be observed concerning other apologizing strategies, which were used by all respondents (100%) irrespective of the gender of the apologizees and relative familiarity between the interactants.

For *blaming the victim*, the bar-charts constructed in relation to the percentage of its male and female users against relative familiarity of the interactants have been demonstrated as *Figure t* and *u* in *Appendix IX*. Taking a look at the figures, it is seen that all respondents tended to *blame* male victims more than female victims who were their *friends* and *close friends*. Meanwhile, for *intimate partners*, it is noticeable that no male respondents used the strategy when they apologized. In contrast, nearly half of the female respondents used the strategy.

4.5 Summarization of Findings—Three Major Trends

Taking a look at the findings from a bird's eye view, they can be summarized into 3 main trends: (1) when the relative familiarity between the interactants increased from *strangers* to *close friends*, the proportion of respondents using positive apologizing strategies dropped (or using negative apologizing strategies increased); (2) in the meantime, all respondents tended to adopt positive apologizing strategies to female apologizees and negative apologizing strategies to male apologizees; (3) when the relative familiarity between the interactants became *intimate partners*, the proportion of male respondents adopting positive apologizing strategies (or avoiding using negative apologizing strategies) and the percentage of female respondents employing negative apologizing strategies (or avoiding using positive apologizing strategies) were further enhanced.

In consideration of this summarization, qualitative data has been utilized to identify the origination of the abovementioned trends, which was found to be related to people's

conception towards femininity in the society of Hong Kong. This will be discussed in detail in the following section.

5 Discussion

Contributing to the trends observable were 3 factors, with the association of physiological and psychological delicacy to femininity but physical strength and emotional stability to masculinity more influential. In addition, females were perceived to be more conscious of their appearance than their male counterparts, which had shed another bright light on the phenomenon.

5.1 The First Factor—Physical Fragility VS Physical Strength

During the interviews, there were no lacks of interviewees justified their tendency of using more positive apologizing strategies to female hearers by mentioning women's physical fragility, which was in contrast to men's physical strength. For example, when the interviewees were asked whether they tended to *express their concern* for the apologizees irrespective of their gender, they responded by saying (*Appendix III*):

(Dialogue translated from Chinese into English)

Male interviewee B: I will ask the girl if I have hurt her, because the crush may be too strong for the girl. But for boys, there is no such need.

Female interviewee A: I will only ask the girls if they are alright. Boys are much larger in size, they will definitely be fine.

In view of the qualitative data, it appears that respondents tended to associate femininity to physical delicacy but masculinity to physical strength, which brought about their particular concern about female apologizees' possible discomfort after the offense was made. This resulted in their inclination of adopting more positive apologizing strategies and less negative apologizing strategies to females than males.

5.2 The Second Factor—Emotional Sensibility VS Emotional Stability

The perceivable emotional sensibility of females and emotional stability of males also illuminated the scenario observed in the study, in that females were portrayed as more emotional fluctuating than males stereotypically. This conception could also be realized in the interviews (*Appendix III*):

(Dialogue translated from Chinese into English)

Interviewer: Will you tend to apologize explicitly, e.g. saying sorry to girls more often than boys? Why?

Female interviewee A: If I am not familiar with the person, I will apologize no matter the person is a boy or a girl. But if we know each other well, I will only say sorry to girls since girls may be angry about the incident. For boys, I will just ignore them.

Interviewer: Will you blame the victim irrespective of their gender? Why?

Female interviewee B: If the boy is someone that I know, I will blame him. But if that is a girl, I will probably not do so, unless I am really close with the girl, because girls are more small-minded than boys.

Seeing the above transcript, it is conceivable that in addition to physical fragility, emotional sensibility has been associated with femininity in Hong Kong, in that girls are regarded to be more small-minded and temperamental than boys. What brings to attention is the gender of the abovementioned interviewee, who was also a female. In other words, females may conceive themselves as more emotional sensitive than their male counterparts as well, which might have resulted in their avoidance to *blame* female apologizees after the offense was made.

5.3 The Third Factor—Appearance Consciousness VS Appearance Ignorance

The respondents' apologetic behavior was also discovered to be affected by their conceptualization that females were much more conscious of their appearance than their male counterparts. This was manifested by the qualitative data collected regarding mild and serious offenses, which involved spilling coffee onto the outfit of the apologizee (*Appendix III*):

(Dialogue translated from Chinese into English)

Interviewer: Will you tend to apologize explicitly, e.g. saying sorry to girls more often than boys? Why?

Male interviewee B: Actually it depends on our relationship. In case I am not familiar with the person, I have to say sorry no matter the person is a boy or a girl. But if I am close to the person, I will be more anxious to girls, because girls care about their appearance. She will be so dead if she dates someone on that day.

Female interviewee B: My attitude will probably be the same to boys and girls. But I may be a bit more anxious about girl's situation. It is hard for her not to care about her dress when it is all stained by coffee.

Interviewer: Will you minimize the severity of the offense irrespective of their gender? For example, you may say something like "luckily your dress is cheap".

Male interviewee C: I may minimize the offense if the boy is someone that I am familiar with, but I will definitely not do this to girls because girls pay much more attention to their appearance than boys.

Female interviewee B: I will definitely not do this to girls. For boys, my response depends on conditions. If he appears to be really upset, I may not be able to hold myself and say something like: there is no need to be upset because of the coffee stain.

By referring to the response provided by the interviewees, it has been found that men were portrayed to be ignorant about their appearance whilst women were perceived to be on the contrary, in that they thought coffee stain on outfit was supposed to be negligible to boys but emphatic to girls. In view of the diverging perception towards females and males regarding consciousness of appearance, it is understandable that a larger percentage of respondents was found to use positive apologizing strategies (or a smaller percentage of respondents was found to use negative apologizing strategies) to females than males.

5.4 Elevating Sense of Femininity with Intimacy

With the 3 contrasting perceivable characteristics of males and females in mind, the apologetic behavior of males and females to their *intimate partners* becomes explainable. Male respondents were most inclined to adopt positive apologizing strategies but least oriented to use negative apologizing strategies to their *intimate partners*. This may be attributable to the enhanced sense of femininity with intimacy. Incontrovertibly, when women are in face of their *intimate partners*, they will appear to be most feminine, or they will be perceivable to be the most feminine (Gray, 1996). Since femininity is correlated to physical and psychological delicacy as well as consciousness of appearance, it is not surprising that an elevation in femininity will levitate their perceived feminine characteristics in the eyes of their romantic partners. This assumption can be validated by qualitative data (*Appendix III*):

(Dialogue translated from Chinese into English)

Interviewer: With reference to the above questions, will you respond differently if the apologizee is your intimate partner? Why?

Male interviewee B: Of course I have to be nice to my girlfriend. I will definitely say sorry first, and ask her if I have hurt her or not. I will not blame her at all.

Male interviewee A: I will be so dead if the person is my girlfriend! I will really have no idea what to do. She must be really mad at me. Maybe I should buy her another dress as compensation.

Interviewer: Alright! Let's talk about Situation 3. Actually I only want to ask 1 question about it...will you blame your intimate partner after this incident? Why?

Male interviewee B: Of course not. All I will care is whether I have hurt her.

Interviewer: How about A and C? You guys think in the same way?

Male interviewee A: Yes!

Male interviewee C: Absolutely!

Considering the abovementioned interview transcript, it has been proven that males' tendency of adopting positive apologizing strategies and their disinclination of using negative apologizing strategies to female apologizees will be reinforced when they are facing their *intimate partners*.

The same theory can be applied to explain the apologetic behavior of females to their *intimate partners* with reference to the perceived characteristics of masculinity—since men are portrayed as most physical competent, emotionally stable and ignorant about their appearance in face of their *intimate partners* (Gray, 1996), the conceptual damage resulted on them owing to the offense will be downplayed. Similarly, evidence can be drawn from the interviews (*Appendix III*):

(Dialogue translated from Chinese into English)

Interviewer: With reference to the above questions, will you respond differently if the apologizee is your intimate partner? Why?

Female interviewee C: If that is my boyfriend, than I will not need to worry so much. I do not think there are boys who will be angry because of minor things like this. Maybe I will not even say sorry to him, I will just ask him why he cannot see his girlfriend.

Female interviewee B: My response will be the same if the person is my boyfriend. I may just help him clean that up, nothing special. I do not think he will be angry because of that.

Interviewer: Alright! Let's talk about Situation 3. Actually I only want to ask 1 question about it...will you blame your intimate partner after this incident? Why?

Female interviewee C: I will not blame him much, but I will still ask him why he cannot see me, because it really is impossible for him not to see me coming.

Female interviewee A: This is so true!

Female interviewee B: Totally agree.

In view of the transcript, it can be seen that boys were portrayed as emotionally stable by their *intimate partners*, and therefore they were conceived to be less psychologically vulnerable to damage. This strengthened females' orientation of adopting negative apologizing strategies and their disinclination of using positive apologizing strategies when they are facing their *intimate partners*.

5.5 Women—the Perceived Power of Powerlessness

With the conceptualized characteristics associated with femininity and masculinity, it is deducible that in today's Hong Kong, females are portrayed as social-powerless group, which is in contrast to the powerfulness of males. However, it is the powerlessness of females that enable them to gain more power specifically in apologizing situations—owing to the perceived powerlessness associated with women but perceived powerfulness associated with men, the perceptual damage caused by female apologizer to male apologizee is downgraded. The seriousness of the offense may therefore be lessened, which results in the female apologizers' tendency of using more negative apologizing strategies but less positive apologizing strategies to male apologizees.

On the contrary, the perceptual damage caused by male apologizer to female apologizee is heightened due to their social power difference. The seriousness of the offense may therefore increase, which results in the male apologizers' tendency of using more positive apologizing strategies but less negative apologizing strategies to female apologizees.

As aforementioned in *Section 2.4*, the more powerful people are supposed to use more negative apologizing strategies but less positive apologizing strategies to the apologizee, therefore females in Hong Kong may appear to be in possession of higher social power than males regarding apologetic situations. However, **women's perceived higher social power in apologetic situations** is actually originated from **their powerless position in society** (*Figure 4*).

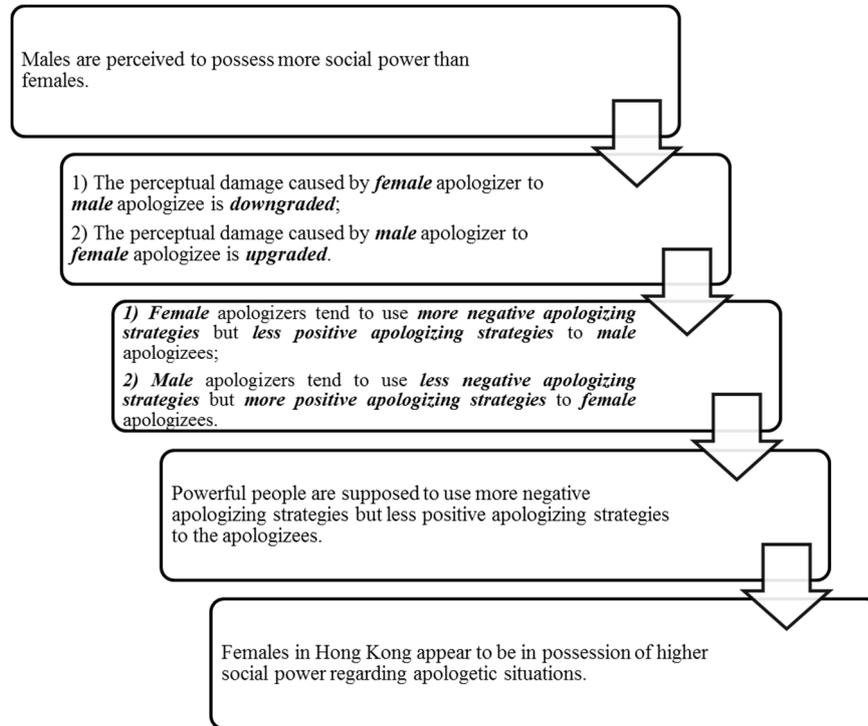


Fig. 4. The Perceived Higher Social Power Possessed by Powerless Females.

6 Limitations of the Study

In spite of the apparent persuasiveness of the study, it is not without limitations, which were all originated from the adoption of discourse completion test—with the use of questionnaires, authentic recordings were not available as resources. As a result, respondents' tone could not be observable during the process of apologizing. Their attitude and emotions could only be partially determinable with reference to their written response.

In the meantime, since participants were required to provide their apologetic responses on the basis of the situations described in the questionnaire, it was in all likelihood that the reliability of the data collected was highly subjected to their capacity in constructing imagery regarding the situations. The reaction of the apologizees in each situation, which may have played an important role in determining the apologetic behavior of the apologizers, could also not be taken into account by the participants when they were composing their dialogues. As a result, the authenticity of the data was further undermined.

7 Pedagogical Implications

Regardless of the observable limitations, the current study is able to offer an in-depth insight pertaining to the powerless situation of females in Hong Kong—women appear to have made remarkable strides in their social standing over the past several decades, overcoming many of the obstacles that subordinated them to male supremacy by occupying authoritative positions in various sectors contemporarily (Mcferran, 2012; Wassener, 2011), but **behind the illusory of gender egalitarianism are prevailing cultural representations of femininity in association with physical fragility, emotional sensibility and appearance consciousness**, which could finally be unveiled in the apologizing strategies adopted by both males and females in this city. Conceivably, the war of gender equality fought by local feminists is still ongoing, and their side will never win unless the socio-psychological conception towards femininity can be transformed in future.

8 Conclusion

In this paper, the power relations of males and females have been investigated with reference to their apologetic behavior in Hong Kong. In doing so, the apologizing strategies summarized by Al-Adaileh (2007) were employed as the main framework of the research. Inspiration was than drawn from the studies of Al-Adaileh (2007) and Bataineh & Bataineh (2005) regarding the methodology to be adopted. With the use of oral discourse completion test and interviews, qualitative and quantitative data have been yielded successfully to reveal the inter-relationship between apologetic behavior and the power relations of males and females.

In spite of the study's success in exploring the power relations of males and females regarding their apologetic strategies used in Hong Kong, the unprecedentedness of the investigation has implied the necessity of launching similar researches with wider range of participants under various geographical contexts in future. It is hoped that more in-depth insights could be yielded concerning the power relations of males and females outside Hong Kong in some not too distant tomorrow.

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Professional Discourse Analysis: Specific Language Features in Telephone Communication Breakdown

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Abstract. In call centre communication, the only channel of communication between Customer Service Representative (CSR) and customer is the telephonic conversation. However, little attention has been focused on linguistics analyses of authentic complaint calls or calls with “communication breakdown”. In the present study, 100 English telephone conversations (approximately 52,600 words) have been collected from the Philippines and transcribed in Hong Kong. These spoken data are complex conversations between the Filipino CSRs and American customers. Systemic Functional Linguistics approach (SFL) is chosen as the theoretical framework (see Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). This is because SFL is a model of grammar, with a rich account of lexicogrammatical features, and also an approach which locates language and meaning at the level of context, culture and discourse (Halliday, 1978). The study examines the generic stages, lexico-grammatical and voice quality features. The findings are significant to enhance understanding of the language of this rapidly developing industry.

Keywords: call centre conversation, communication breakdown, Systemic Functional Linguistics, language features, Filipino CSR and American Customer

1 Introduction

Call centre conversations may include calling a telephone centre to enquire about a service or product, or may involve a wide range of customer service activities and goals. The data for the present study were collected from call centres in Manila (The Philippines). The spoken data are audio-recordings of conversations in inbound commercial customer-service telephone enquiries between Filipino CSRs and American English-speaking customers. An inbound call centre mainly deals with phone-in calls, and the CSRs answer enquiries (NASSCOM, 2015).

However, to date call centre research has mainly been undertaken in the business and management field (e.g., Batt, 1999; Irish, 2000; Knights & McCabe, 2003; Taylor & Bain, 1999). Only in the last few years have studies started to discuss the meaning construed through choices in the language in authentic calls (see Section 2.1 for a detailed discussion of language related research in call centres). Linguistic studies have started to scratch the surface of call centre conversations, and some have started to discuss issues of language and “complaints” or termed “communication breakdown”. Unfortunately, due to a lack of research and detailed understanding of the linguistic

complexity of customers' complex requests and objections, the terms "complaint/communication breakdown" stills remain a commonsense notion. Hence the CSR often has to use his or her own intuition to deal with such issues. It is also evident from the literature that little is known about the structure, goals, language resources and voice quality feature in authentic complaint calls. Such features of the language of communication breakdown in call centre conversations have not been studied in a systematic manner, neither by those in the industry nor by applied linguists in academia. The research objective of the present study is to investigate a range of linguistic features in complaint calls found in this emerging discourse. This has major implications for the CSR who has to deal with customers and customer complaints on a daily basis.

2 Relevant Studies

To maintain quality control and ensure the CSR projects the appropriate personality to the customer, call centres are often tightly systematized, with strict regulations and scripted conversations with the customer (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007). While CSRs may often follow such a script, the effectiveness of the standardization has been open to challenge. Negative impacts of scripting have been identified, with scripting viewed as obsolete for its limited language variation and little negotiation flexibility (Cameron, 2000b; Forey & Lockwood, 2007; Wharton, 1996). For example, the noted overuse of modality by the CSR is probably the result of the CSR assuming that using more modals with low modality, such as *may* and *can*, will present a softer image, and perhaps calm an irate customer. However, the overuse of modality is likely to lead to failure of the interaction (Wan & Forey, in preparation). In such cases, the CSR fails to provide an appropriate response to the customer, and as a result, both parties will be very frustrated (Kwa, 2006). Sometimes, the customer may think that the CSR is restricted by the machine and system (Smith, Valsecchi, Mueller, & Gabe, 2008).

2.1 Existing Call Centre Language Studies

The number of applied linguistics studies which have analysed the language of call centre communication in terms of linguistic features is very limited. Past studies have stressed the importance of the attitude presented by the CSR in call centre interactions. Barker (1998) found that in some call centres nearly 60 per cent of customer interactions take place over the telephone, and as a consequence the CSR's manner has a critical effect on the quality of that interaction (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Peccei & Rosenthal, 1997). Other studies have discussed call centre interactions taking a sociolinguistic approach. Cameron (2000b) focused on gender to discuss the sociolinguistic characteristics of the speech and vocal style prescribed to CSRs and used by customers. Her data were collected in UK call centres, and comprised observations, interviews and written training materials. Cameron (2000a) identified a phenomenon she called communication factory, caused by using standard scripts. She argued that efficiency can be enhanced, but that the cost of a little language variation

needed to be paid. Lockwood, Forey and Price (2008) suggested that since 2000 the demand for CSRs to perform better has increased greatly, with market forces exercising strong pressure to use standardized English scripts. With even different understandings of the same word being a problem, as illustrated above, the overseas customer and local staff often experience confusion, which may result in customer dissatisfaction. Adolphs et al. (2004) adopted corpus and conversational approaches to analyse the British National Health Service Direct (NHS Direct) telephone conversations for communication patterns in health care encounters. They discuss the use of personal pronouns such as *you* and *your*, modal adjuncts such as *can*, *could*, *must* and health care knowledge. However, Cameron (2000a, 2000b) and Adolphs et al. (2004) can be criticized for the limitations imposed by their sample sizes and methods of data collection. Cameron (2000a, 2000b) only studied written training materials. Adolphs et al.'s (2004) study was centred on the caller. The researchers pretended that they were patients and called the call centre for health care service. More importantly, the above studies are only partially relevant to the present study because they do not analyse communication between non-native speakers and native speakers in workplace contexts. The UK-based studies concentrated on the interactions between clients and CSRs, both being native English speakers. They were more interested in the knowledge of health industry professionals and did not present a very detailed investigation of the linguistics choices made by them.

Similarly to the present study, Forey and Lockwood (2007), Lockwood et al. (2008) and Forey (2010) believe that there is a lack of attention given to interpersonal meaning. Studies are more interested in identifying problems and negative feelings in calls arising from difficulties related to a CSR's inability to deal with a frustrated customer, a CSR being vague, customers' aggressive and demanding attitudes, and so on (Forey & Lockwood, 2007; Lockwood et al., 2008). As a result, the conceptual awareness of interpersonal language being an essential key to understanding the negotiation process in call centre conversations is missing. The present study takes a different perspective, studying interpersonal meaning in call centre conversations by focussing on the structuring of the whole interaction, using SFL, as illustrated in the studies by Forey and Lockwood (2007) and Hood and Forey (2008). The findings of the present study can be used as a model for call centre training as it intends to present linguistic features to support the understanding of interpersonal meaning in call centre discourse.

3 Systemic Functional Linguistics and Language

The guiding linguistic theory in the present study is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) which is an important existing linguistic theory. SFL explicitly acknowledges a symbolic relationship between language system, society and human activity (Halliday, McIntosh, & Strevens, 1964/2007; Martin, 2001). In SFL, language is understood as a primary social semiotic system (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Language is an integral feature of social activity which distinguishes human beings from other animals. People use language to express their meanings and experiences (Halliday et al., 1964/2007). Language functions to construct our sense of the society, to exchange shared value and

to negotiate relationship (Halliday, 1973; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin & Rose, 2007). In the present study, the customer and the CSR use language to perform their social activities, for example, making insurance enquiries over the telephone. Language is an integral feature of meaning making in customer service encounters. Speakers or writers select their language options unconsciously to construe meanings, for example, “singular versus plural” and “declarative versus interrogative” (Martin, 2010, p. 14; also see Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin & Rose, 2007). Hence, SFL states that language options are systematised. Within SFL theory, language was modelled as different strata systems. In the present study, language is modelled as a tri-stratal system (Martin, 1999), comprising semantics, lexicogrammar and phonology/graphology. Martin (1999, p. 39) reconceptualised the model of context, comprising register and genre, as language’s content stratum. In turn, context was considered stratified as two levels, genre and register, with register conceptualised as realising genre and language as realising register (Martin, 1999). He also specified that within the language system, semantics and lexicogrammar constitute the content strata of phonology/graphology, while phonology/graphology is the expression stratum of semantics and lexicogrammar (Martin, 1999, p. 39).

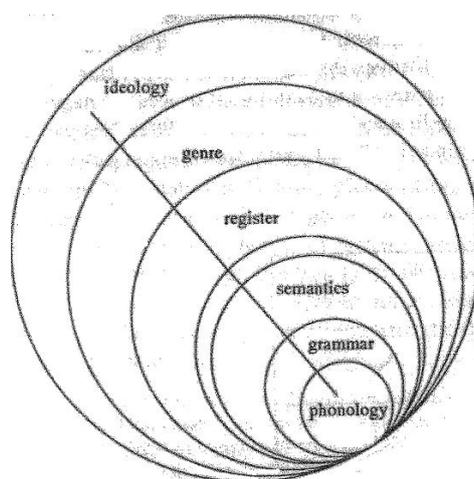


Fig. 1. Language and its Semiotic Environment (Martin, 1992, p. 7)

Figure 1 displays the relationship between language and its semiotic environment. Later, Martin (2007) revised this stratified model and suggested that phonology and paralinguage are concurrent expression forms which share some common features. In addition, SFL has also been applied to quantitative studies, such as corpus linguistics (see Matthiessen, 2006). The spoken data of the present study involve a wide range of linguistic and paralinguistic choices which enact attitudinal and emotional meanings. Interpersonal meaning of empathy and disappointment can be examined by analyzing lexico-grammatical features. SFL enables a researcher to adopt a clear, highly systematic and reliable method, thus it provides a comprehensive framework to analyze the data.

4 Methodology

The data were collected from insurance call centres in the Philippines. The data were gathered in an ethnographic study where call centre representatives were shadowed, in interviews conducted with a range of informants, and in a text analysis of transcribed telephone conversations, focusing on interpersonal features at points of negotiation in complex calls. 100 English calls in the Call Centre Communication Research (CCCR) corpus were briefly studied and 10 complex insurance calls were studied in detail. The present study is based on a Departmental Research project called Call Centre Communication Research (CCCR) of the Department of English at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. (Link: http://www.engl.polyu.edu.hk/call_centre/default.html.) The audio data collected from English-language call centres pertains to companies providing financial consultancy services and technological services, and to insurance companies in the US. The 100 English-language calls comprise about 56,632 words, and the calls represent about seven hours of spoken data. The average duration of each call is 4 mins 7 secs, comprising 567 words. Ten dyadic call centre conversations, involving a total of twenty participants, such as ten Filipino CSRs and ten American customers from an insurance company in the US were identified in the CCCR corpus. Topics ranged mainly from payment enquiries, company policies, insurance claims, loan balance and account information. All names, figures and sensitive references were changed in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

5 Findings and Discussion

This section starts by presenting generic stages in the call centre conversations. It will further discuss lexico-grammatical features corresponding to each generic stage. Lastly, Section 5.3 argues for the importance of the voice quality feature, which is found to be indispensable to construing interpersonal meaning in call centre conversations.

5.1 Generic Stages

In the CCCR corpus, general calls such as technical support and travel service are quite simple, direct and with fewer complex exchanges and negotiation. In order to have a more in-depth analysis, insurance calls in the corpus were focused. My generic analysis verified an existing simplified pattern, such as the generic stages reported in Forey and Lockwood (2007). Generic stages can be both obligatory and optional. An obligatory stage is understood as a genre-defining element which must be present for the text to realize a particular genre, while an optional stage is categorized as selective. The categorization is based on the probability of a stage being realised, i.e. it must be present. A particular schematic structure of a complex call is staged, and the corresponding social purposes of the core data were studied and identified as follows:

Opening ^ {Identification} ^ {Purpose} ^ (Clarification) ^ [(Objection) ^ (Legitimization)] ^ {Servicing} ^ (Transfer ^ Transfer-Opening ^ Transfer-Identification ^ Transfer-Purpose ^ Transfer-Closing) ^ (Closing)

The notational conventions adopted here include the caret sign ^ which is used to signal the sequence of stages, the brackets () to indicate the optional features of the genre, the square brackets [] to present recursive elements, and lastly the brace { } indicates recurring stage (cf. Halliday & Hasan, 1980).

The *Opening stage* is an obligatory conventionalized staging. This stage consists of greeting, introducing the organization, position and name of the CSR, and showing readiness to offer assistance. The CSR starts the conversation, *good morning, thanks for calling Company XXX, my name is Brian, how may I help you today?*

The *Identification stage* carries a social purpose, namely, to verify the caller's personal identity with the company's database, for example, name, policy number, address and telephone number. Call centres acting for the investment, banking and insurance industries deal with sensitive customer personal information. This stage is interpreted as obligatory and is thus a genre-defining element. Without identification, CSRs are not allowed to disclose account information, and the conversations cannot proceed any further. In addition, the Identification stage is also a recurring stage, that is, it can occur more than once in the conversation.

The *Purpose stage* is also an obligatory element. The social purpose of this stage is to identify the intention(s) of the call. This stage is very critical because the CSR has to pay attention to the customer's needs, both explicit and implicit needs. Some customers' needs are expressed with inscribed attitude. The Purpose stage is also a recurring stage as the customer may sometimes restate the purpose of his call.

The *Clarification stage* is an optional stage. The social purpose of Clarification is to collect and/or check information, or probe for further information regarding the intention of the caller. If the call is not complex, then the CSR is able to handle the call without collecting additional information.

The *Objection stage* is the expression of opposition to or dislike of something or someone. This is an optional and recurring stage and is usually raised by the customer.

The *Legitimization stage* is also an optional and recurring stage. This stage functions to supply information to the objections made.

The *Servicing stage* refers to offering information, solutions, instructions, suggestions, advice or explanations and giving an apology or showing empathy. This is an obligatory stage. After solving the current problem or answering the enquiry, the CSR will usually check for further needs. For example, in Transcript 58, turn 101, the CSR asks *and is there any further question, maam?* The Servicing stage is also considered a recurring one as it can appear in the conversation repeatedly.

Transferring stages are defined as a set of optional stages that the CSR seeks from other professionals or a third party in a higher position, for example, technicians and supervisors. This stage usually occurred upon a request from the customer. The customer is on hold and stays on the line, while the CSR seeks help from the supervisor. During the conversation between CSR and supervisor, the whole transferring process includes Transfer-Opening, Transfer-Identification, Transfer-Purpose and Transfer-Closing. The CSR then forwards the call to the supervisor. The supervisor will assist the customer after the transfer.

The *Closing stage* is the final stage. The social purpose of this stage is to restate key points, summarize the call, signal the end of service, and/or express appreciation. The Closing stage is considered an optional stage.

In the present study call centre conversations are classified according to their complexity. The generic staging of the general call tends to be: Opening ^ {Identification} ^ {Purpose} ^ {Servicing} ^ (Closing). However, a complex call may have additional stages, such as Clarification, Objection, Legitimization and Transfer, compared to a general call.

5.2 Lexico-Grammatical Features

Analysing lexicogrammatical features of texts can help us to understand the attitude of speakers. The present study shares a view with Stubbs (1996) that “whenever speakers (or writers) say anything, they encode their point of view towards it” (p. 197). This section elaborates how the CSR and the customer negotiate interpersonal meaning by using different lexicogrammatical features in complex calls. A complex transfer call, Transcript 7, has been selected and its lexicogrammatical features studied.

Table 1 Lexicogrammatical Features in Transcript 7 (adapted from Coffin, Donohue and North, 2009, p. 260)

Staging/ Schematic structure	Lexico-grammatical features	Examples in Transcript 7 (turn/speaker)
Opening	interrogative mood	may I have your policy number please? (T1/R7) how may I help you today? (T9/R7) how can I assist you? (T128/S7)
	modal finites	may (T1/R7)
	name of the CSR	Polly speaking (T1/R7)
	name of the department	customer service (T1/R7)
	tense: present	this is (T128/S7) may I have (T1/R7) how may I (T9/R7)
Identification	date of birth	1 1 64 (T6/C7)
	interrogative mood	may I have your policy number? (T1/R7) what's your name? (T28/C7) and your last name? (T30/C7)
	minimal response	alright (T7/R7)
	polarity	yes (T8/C7)
	policy and social reference number	01234567 (T6/C7)
	possessive pronoun	your (T28/C7)
	tense: present	verify (T5/R7)
tense: present perfect	I've sent (T28/C7)	
Purpose	adjuncts of place	here (T17/R7)
	concession	but (T18/C7)
	evaluative lexis	upset (T18/C7) important (T18/C7)

	intensifier	a little bit (T18/C7) very (T18/C7)
	minimal response	umm (T10/C7) mhm (T11/R7)
	modal finites	can (T12/C7) would (T12/C7) need to (T12/C7)
	negative polarity	I don't know (T12/C7) have not forgotten (T12/C7)
	number	twice (T10/C7) both policies (T18/C7)
	personal pronoun	me (T12/C7) it (T18/C7) I (T12/C7) they (T18/C7)
	possessive pronoun	his name (T10/C7) my file (T12/C7) my account (T12/C7)
	temporal adjuncts	now (T12/C7) immediately (T12/C7) over a week (T12/C7) still (T12/C7) the end of the day (T18/C7) tomorrow (T18/C7) by the end of tomorrow (T18/C7)
	tense: continuous	I'm getting (T18/C7)
	tense: future	will have it (T18/C7)
	tense: past	said (T12/C7)
	tense: present	there's (T18/C7)
	tense: present perfect	I've spoken with (T10/C7) have messed (T18/C7) I've sent (T18/C7) hasn't happened (T18/C7) it's been (T12/C7)
	interrogative mood: yes/no question	assigning the policy? (T13/R7) you want a confirmation letter faxed to you?(T15/R7)
Clarification	minimal response	ok (T13 and T15/R7)
	positive polarity	yes (T16/C7)
	concession	but (T73/C7)
Objections	conditional clause	if y'all could just do (T71/C7)
	declarative mood	I talk to somebody (T32/C7)
	evaluative lexis	fed up (T32/C7) rushed (T71/C7) peace of mind (T71/C7) hate (T73/C7) different (T73/C7) upset (T75/C7) corrected (T77/C7) frustrating (T79/C7) screw things up (T79/C7)

		a law suit (T79/C7) have been misled (T79/C7) lie (T81/C7) helpful (T81/C7) appreciated (T81/C7) fuss (T85/C7) aggravated (T85/C7) I thought he had just strung me along (T111/C7) you are a large company (T119/C7) wrong (T119/C7)
	intensifier	a little (T32/C7) highly (T75/C7) I do need to (T79/C7) so (T85/C7)
	interrogative mood: yes/no question	can I put your name on it? (T73/C7)
	minimal response	ok (T74 & T76/R7) um (T78/R7) oh (T72/R7)
	modal finites	can (T69/C7) need (T71/C7) should (T66/R7) have to (T69/C7) would (T70/C7) could (T69/C7)
	negative polarity	not you but him (T34/C7) don't have it right here (T73/C7) nothing (T75/C7) never (T79/C7) don't know (T83/C7) don't do (T115/C7)
	number	twice (T75/C7) all my life (T79/C7) five day turn (T83/C7)
	personal pronoun	I (T84/R7) you (T81/C7)
	possessive pronoun	your company (T79/C7)
	quantifier	somebody (T73/C7) something (T79/C7)
	temporal adjuncts	every time (T32/C7) ten minutes of waiting (T32/C7) immediately (T71/C7) 4 months (T71/C7)
	tense: past	talked (T75/C7)
	tense: present	talk (T32/C7) am (T32/C7) get (T73/C7) need (T83/C7)
	tense: present continuous tense	I'm going (T73/C7)
Legitimization	concession	but (T27/R7)

	declarative: personal recount	I called him (T26/C7) I spoke with him (T26/C7)
	minimal response	ok (T27/R7)
	modal finites	can (T27/R7)
	negative polarity	has not done (T26/C7)
	number	twice (T26/C7)
	passive voice	is being worked (T27/R7)
	personal pronoun	I (T27/R7) we (T26/C7) me (T26/C7)
	possessive pronoun	your request (T27/R7)
	temporal adjuncts	right now (T27/R7)
	tense: past	called (T26/C7) spoke with (T26/C7) assured (T26/C7) was (T26/C7) said (T26/C7) wanted (T27/R7)
	tense: present perfect	have to have (T26/C7)
Servicing	adverb	exactly (T20/C7) actually (T58/C7)
	concession	however (T37/R7) but (T58/C7) sorry (T52/C7)
	conditional clause	if I fax you that today (T67/C7) if you have the form (T70/R7) if I do this (T89/C7)
	evaluative lexis	important (T38/C7) incorrect (T42/C7) fine (T50/C7) mixed up (T24/C7) the long hold (T66/R7) a huge mess (T69/C7) rushed (T86/R7) incomplete (T94/R7) clear (T96/R7) urgent (T38/C7)
	intensifier	I do understand (T35/R7) did verify (T66/R7) the most (T84/R7) again (T101/C7)
	minimal response	ah (T19/R7) ok (T102/C7) uh huh (T25/R7) alright (T23/R7) well (T38/C7) mhm (T21/R7) okay (T19/R7)
	modal finites	should (T19/R7) could (T24/C7) can't (T24/C7)

		can (T27/R7) would (T40/C7) need to (T46/C7) should have happened (T43/R7) should be (T62/C7) have to (T69/C7)
	negative polarity	didn't make (T24/C7) any (T24/C7) never (T24/C7) anything (T24/C7)
	number	10 percent (T19/R7) 11 000 dollars (T22/C7) too (T24/C7) several supervisors (T35/R7) totally (T50/C7) primary (T57/R7) three kids (T59/R7) all (T62/C7) a hundred a thousand dollars (T62/C7) whole (T62/C7) the quickest way (T62/C7) 5 business days (T70/R7) one hundred one thousand dollars (T89/C7) ten hundred thousand dollars (T89/C7) 10% (T94/R7)
	passive voice	it is being processed (T37/R7) should have taken care (T38/C7)
	positive polarity	right (T60/C7)
	possessive pronoun	your (T61/R7)
	quantifier	several supervisors (T35/R7)
	temporal adjuncts	right now (T37/R7) in my life (T24/R7) over a week ago (T38/C7) months (T38/C7)
	tense: past	sent (T24/C7) said (T24/C7) showed (T24/C7) made (T37/R7) assured (T40/C7) told (T50/C7) was (T62/C7)
	tense: present perfect	I've sent (T24/R7) I've never dealt with (T24/R7)
Transfer	concession	but (T121/C7)
	evaluative lexis	appreciate your help (T123/C7) welcome (T124/R7) have a great day (T124/R7)
	intensifier	I do have (T137/R7)
	minimal response	ok (T122/R7)
	modal finites	need to (T121/C7)
	negative polarity	not for you (T121/C7)

	personal pronoun	I (T121/C7) you (T125/C7)
	quantifier	any (T121/C7) someone (T121/C7)
	tense: present	hold on (T122/R7)
	tense: present perfect	has handled (T121/C7)
Closing	ending	Bye bye (T143/R7)
	evaluative lexis	thank you (T138/C7) welcome (T139/R7) have a great day (T141/R7) appreciate (T140/C7)
	intensifier	do appreciate (T140/C7)
	temporal adjuncts	now (T141/R7)

As outlined in Table 1, several categories have been used frequently, such as intensifier, number and quantity, tense, temporal adjuncts, modal finite and evaluative lexis. In the stages Objection, Legitimization and Servicing, there is more evaluative lexis than in other stages. Negative evaluative lexis such as *fed up*, *peace of mind*, *hate*, *upset*, *lie*, *frustrating*, *a huge mess* can be located frequently in Objection stage. However, the explicit attitudinal resources that were identified in the spoken data were limited. Quantifiers and intensifiers that carry values which can be graded up or down such as *highly*, *a little*, *somebody*, *exactly*, *again* were frequent. These are the main lexicogrammatical resource used to realise frustration in call centre conversations.

5.3 Voice Quality Analysis

The CSR must maintain a positive attitude at work (Lee, 2006). Apart from positive lexicogrammatical choices, good interpersonal meaning cannot be achieved without the contribution of voice quality. However, in the literature the meaning-making process of voice quality is often interpreted as less systematic. On my field visits I investigated that some call centre trainers often require the CSR to sound “positive and sincere” and to avoid offensive expressions. However, voice quality features that result in creating interpersonal meaning of “positive and sincere” have yet to be defined and remain unexplored. Often in such training or communication, voice quality terms are used with little or no definition. A common sense interpretation is left for the CSR to understand and act upon, which in a second language might be very difficult. Thus there is a strong need to seek a reliable and systematic analytical method for analysing voice quality.

Drawing on SFL, van Leeuwen (1999) has developed a System Network of voice quality, a systematically theorized Sound Quality framework to model this meaning-making system. van Leeuwen (1999) has included a discussion of a wide range of types of sound quality, such as music from movies and songs, the human voice, and even sound from musical instruments and bare hands. The key features of Sound Quality include tension, loudness, pitch register (High/Low), roughness, breathiness, vibrato and nasality. This framework was used as a starting point in the present study to look at human voice quality in the call centre discourse. The present study identified several

key examples as being important points in the text where voice quality seems to clearly flag interpersonal meaning. Four voice quality features, namely volume (Loud/Soft), tension from the muscle of the throat (Tense/Lax), pitch (High/Low) and rhythm (Slow/Fast) emerged in the call centre data (see Fig. 2). All voice quality features identified in this analysis refer to the relative shift of voice quality features in the conversation

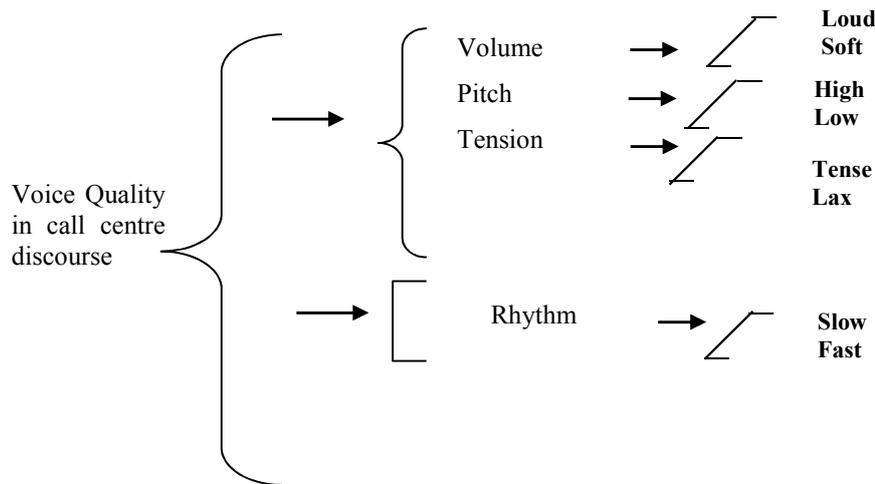


Fig. 2. System Network of Voice Quality in Call Centre Discourse

In Fig. 2, Volume, Tension, Pitch and Rhythm are shown as simultaneous systems, indicated by the curly bracket in the system network. A speaker can choose Volume, Tension and/or Pitch and combine these with different Rhythm patterns simultaneously. Instances of the categories Loud, Soft, High, Low, Tense, Lax, Fast and Slow are frequently found in the spoken data. For example, the customer tends to use a High, Loud and or Tense voice at points of negotiation in complex calls. On the contrary, the CSR uses Soft and Low voices for providing further information, or sometimes to comfort an angry customer. However, the CSR will also use High and Loud voice features for some professional explanations across a few turns. I believe that when the CSR is very confident about his/her product or service knowledge, a higher and louder voice is projected, for example, in transcript 16, turn 121, R12 uses a High and Loud voice to offer essential information to the customer.

When a CSR or a customer construes their attitudinal standpoint, they not only express their attitudes, but also dynamically negotiate and share their views and feelings (Wan, 2008, 2010). The interaction between the CSR and the customer is dynamic in terms of both lexicogrammatical and voice quality features, which are co-developed throughout. For example, the CSR usually starts the call to construe positive interpersonal meaning: *how may I help you today, maam?* This opening greeting utilizes a soft voice of lower volume and positive lexicogrammatical resources.

However, during the stages where a complex negotiation is lodged, a customer may contradict and challenge the CSR's positive meanings by using negative lexicogrammatical resources and a range of voice quality features such as softness (cold anger), loudness, high pitch (hot anger) and so on. The customer tends to stretch their disappointments by using more Intensity and Quantity resources. Very often, customers may increase the severity of their problems and thus prolong Average Handling Time (see Hood & Forey, 2008). The CSR copes with the increased severity of a complex call by closing down the exaggerated level to accomplish the task and to meet the expected target AHT for the call. The CSR works to counter such realisations. In this way a dynamic negotiation process is created. A call with serious communication breakdown consists of negative voice quality and negative evaluative lexis. The CSR aims to be successful in construing positive interpersonal meaning with positive voice quality and lexicogrammatical choices. This dynamic negotiation process is applicable to call centre conversations and also to other customer service conversations where complex negotiations or communication breakdown occur.

6 Conclusion

Applied linguistics research into interpersonal meanings realised in call centres, particularly into how the CSR and the customer use language to construe meaning, are extremely useful but unfortunately limited (see Adolphs, Brown, Carter, Crawford, & Sahota, 2004; Cameron, 2000a, 2000b). The present study was thus motivated by concerns relating to complaints and lack of effective training materials in the call centre industry. How language makes attitudinal meaning and how this is realised in call centre conversations needs to be studied. The present study investigated generic stages, lexico-grammatical features and voice quality features in call centre conversations. The findings of the present study hope to extend the body of knowledge relevant considered in applied linguistics, work place training and business studies.

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“Killing” Her Softly: Breast Cancer Metaphors in Hong Kong

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Abstract. Cancer is never a mere illness but also a cultural phenomenon entangled with discourses of power and resistance. Having been bombarded by the widely circulated metaphors of breast cancer as “a killer” from the mass media, medical authorities and awareness campaigns, women who are diagnosed with breast cancer might see themselves as being handed down a haunting death sentence. These women will often be “enlisted” to join this “battle”, fighting breast cancer with the “help” of the institutionalized biomedical treatments. Notable works by Susan Sontag and Jackie Stacey offer insightful critiques on the politics of cancer, how cancer is metaphorized, experienced and treated. Inspired by Sontag and Stacey, this paper hopes to offer a critical review on how cancer, particularly breast cancer, is metaphorized in Hong Kong, as well as discern their implications and weights that may in turn bring impact to Chinese women experiencing breast cancer.

Keywords. cancer, breast cancer, metaphors

[T]he 'magical power' of stigmatisation insists on contiguity. Like a ghostly presence it continues to haunt the subjects who desire its absence. In this sense, the stigmatised illness might be transformed into metaphor, but its powerful impact extends in excess of such containment.

– Jackie Stacey, *Teratologies: A Cultural Study of Cancer*, 1997

1 Introduction

Breast cancer is a disease or a group of diseases brought by malignant tumour(s) that are caused by abnormal cell growth in the breast. However, this is not how the general public perceives the disease. Instead, most would come up with images in awareness campaign promotional posters and trailers like fruit and alarm. Some would probably associate it with even more haunting expressions such as “a women killer”, “a death threat”, “a tough war” or “a nightmare”. These associations do not come from nowhere but healthcare workers and the mass media.

To many, breast cancer is a medical entity that can be known and treated by only medical science professionals. The medical terminologies and quantified data make the disease even more difficult to be understood by most people, and further exacerbate the power asymmetry of the knower (including healthcare workers and researchers) and the laymen. In order to make the disease more comprehensible and less offensive to the

general public, healthcare workers and awareness campaigners often resort to metaphors when they explain what breast cancer is. Some say, cancer does not kill, but its treatments do. Yet, in her book *Illness as Metaphors* first published in 1978, Susan Sontag (2002) asserts that metaphors and myths too could kill (p.99). How can metaphors kill? Can metaphors not kill? Do metaphors kill in Hong Kong? To answer these questions, a decipherment of breast cancer metaphors in the city would be a good entry point.

When it comes to cancer, the “killer” metaphor is one of the most widely circulated metaphors. Sontag (2002) has illustrated how metaphors like this functioned and stigmatized cancer in the 1970s and 1980s Europe and America. This metaphor too has been heavily cited in Hong Kong mass media, medical authorities and awareness campaigns, but this does not make Sontag’s analysis fully transferable to Hong Kong. It is true that biomedicine is an institution originates from the West, but considering its culturally situated medical discourse over time, a contextualized critical review of the metaphorization of cancer is much needed. And the same goes to metaphors of the breast. When a malignant tumour is found in the breast, the disease, as well as its metaphors, becomes more sophisticated. In view of this, this paper re-reads the various breast cancer metaphors circulated in the mass media, the implications and weights they carry, and discusses how these metaphors may play a role in Chinese women experiencing breast cancer in Hong Kong. Only by identifying and questioning the fallacious metaphors of breast cancer can patients be empowered and make more informed decisions of their illnesses.

2 Breast Cancer as Metaphor

Medicine or medical science is often commended for its objectivity, precision and scientificity; and biomedical doctors are always trusted as professional, rational and knowledgeable. The objectivity façade masks its subjective and rhetorical dimensions. It is also because of these dominant impressions that the arbitrariness of its metaphors is very much undermined. The fact, however, is that medical discourses are never entirely objective and scientific; they can only be made sense and disseminated with language. Retrieving this long-forgotten cultural dimension of medicine, it becomes possible to understand medicine as also a narrative or a text subject to critical deconstruction.

To understand the unfamiliar and make sense of the uncertainty and suffering they experience, metaphors are sometimes indispensable to patients. Without metaphors, human cannot understand the world and create new meaning or realities (Lakoff, 1980, p.96). Without metaphors, human would lose their “self-awareness, meaning, emotional comfort, and potential growth” when conceptualizing illness; and patients would lose “room to maneuver, imaginative possibilities, behavioral options and rhetorical supplies (Gibbs, & Franks, 2002, p.163). Metaphor seems to be indispensable in healing, but it also risks misappropriation (Reisfield, & Wilson, 2004, p.4026). Quoting Barbara Maier and Warren A. Shibles (2010), “To create a metaphor is to create a category-mistake, or produce type-crossing. Two different universes of

discourses are brought together” (p.2). The use of metaphor unveils the subjectivity and narrativity of medical science, especially in doctor-patient communication.

What has been forgotten in medical science is not limited to its narrativity and subjectivity, but also the embodied experience of illness. Due to the dominant narratives of medical science, illnesses are interpreted more authoritatively in quantitative scientific terms. One reason for this dominance could be attributed to the Cartesian dualism that prioritizes the mind over the body. It is this disconnection between the physical body and emotional body that Roger Levin (1999) finds it problematic. To Levin (1999), illnesses such as cancer had better been regarded as “a relational process not separable from its subtle environmental context” (p.123) other than a disease entity. Cancer constellates meanings not merely in medical literature, and also in the synchronous physical, emotional, corporeal and even spiritual self contextually and intertextually (Levin, 1999, p.130) A pioneer to understand and theorize this meaning constellation of illnesses is Sontag.

In *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*, Sontag (2002) re-reads the metaphors of illnesses including leprosy, tuberculosis, cancer, syphilis and AIDS. After delineating how tuberculosis was associated with a romanticized imagery of refinement, Sontag puts forward more detailed criticisms about cancer and AIDS, as well as the shame, fear and guilt that accompanied. When speaking of cancer, for example, one would immediately relate the illness to an “unregulated, abnormal, incoherent growth” of cells (Sontag, 2002, p.64). In early capitalist societies when discipline, self-restraint and rationality were much treasured among Europeans and Americans, these traits and metaphors of cancer are deemed very undesirable against the backdrop of early capitalism. Sontag also shares her earlier breast cancer experience to illustrate the stigma of cancer. As cancer was believed to be a result of psychological defeat, inexpressiveness and repression, patients suffered the illness and also the shame attached to it. In Sontag’s view, these metaphors and myths would sometimes trap people in a dead end, discouraging and hindering them from seeking treatments (pp.97-99). It is therefore essential to strip these metaphors of the illness and steer clear of the distorted truths.

Sontag’s writing liberates illnesses from false metaphors, and at the same time inspires many. Jackie Stacey, being one of them, offers a deliberate account of her journey through teratoma in her book *Teratologies: A Cultural Study of Cancer*. With regard to the power of metaphor, she writes,

The high degree of anxiety about cancer has ensured a continued charge to the metaphors generated around this disease. Fear produces a desire to avoid and deny and most particularly to transform. The fear which the naming of cancer engenders fuels the desire to seek linguistic reassurance: perhaps cancer does not have to be confronted if we do not speak its name. Metaphors rush to the rescue of the subject whose terror is otherwise uncontainable. Metaphors provide the necessary balm for the psychic pain of the unbearable knowledge. Metaphors enable us to detour around undesirable subjects. If metaphor involves the transformation of one thing into another, then the stigmatised category can be displaced effectively through such manoeuvrings (Stacey, 1997, pp.63-64).

Stacey examines the hero and the monster metaphors related to cancer, and the discrepancies between the professional and popular explanations. She also illustrates how gender stereotypes penetrate in alternative medical setting besides the biomedical one. In her Reiki story, the Reiki practitioner paradoxically concluded that Stacey had over-developed her masculine side and lacked femininity (because she, as an academic, had been too rational and analytical), while at the same time, she lacked the masculine (as she was in a relationship with a female) (Stacey, 1997, pp.37-39). Such imposition and reinforcement of the patriarchal visioning of the female body and femininities in no way help the patient but penetrate in many cultures. As gendered metaphors of cancer may not be explicit like this one, metaphors of illness need to be analyzed more systematically.

3 Metaphors as Method

Like the Derridan concept of *différance*, words and signs can never fully replace but forever defer the meaning of another word or sign. Metaphors too would result in a similar difference and deferral of meaning. In order to study how language plays a role in the medical discourse, Maier and Shibles (2010) adopt a naturalistic-humanistic approach and suggest what they called the “metaphorical method”. With respect to different types of metaphors (e.g. substitution, juxtaposition, analogy, simile, or comparison, symbolism, metonymy, synecdoche, synesthesia, reversal, personification, oxymora or combination of opposites, deviation, and metaphor-to-myth fallacy), Maier and Shibles introduce various methods of analysis. To name but a few, these methods include analyzing and critiquing major metaphors used; questioning faulty assumptions, category mistakes; spotting obscure, meaningless and pseudo-questions; clarifying the terms with their synonyms and antonyms, identify possible mistakes, confusion, misuses of terms; expanding and reducing the models and arguments to absurdity, the abstract to the concrete; making the familiar seem strange and so on (Maier & Shibles, 2010, pp.7-11). By using this metaphorical method, they hope that the language used in medical discourses could be clarified more creatively and adequately.

The language of medical discourses is often mediated and translated into simpler, more comprehensible language and different metaphors in order to reach the general public by the mass media. According to the study “Breast Cancer: Knowledge and Perceptions of Chinese Women in Hong Kong” conducted by Hong Kong Baptist University, 73.2% of its respondents receive information of breast cancer from the mass media (Yan, 2009, p.99). If the mass media is the major source of breast cancer information of Chinese women in Hong Kong, media representations of breast cancer would be a key text to understand metaphors of breast cancer. Looking at the mass media in Hong Kong, coverage of breast cancer can be found in television and radio programmes, magazines, and newspapers. There are also breast cancer-themed campaign advertisements (TVCs), films and books. Among the different forms of mass media mentioned, accessing breast cancer information from TVCs and newspaper coverage involves mostly passive viewing, whereas viewing so in television and radio programmes, magazines, films and books is more a conscious choice. When it comes to newspaper, rarely would there be anyone who buy a variety of different newspapers

on the same day and read them all. The situation changed when the free tabloid press entered the market in 2002. Since then, many citizens have taken and read more than one free tabloid every day. It is therefore more meaningful to look at the statistics of breast cancer coverage in free tabloids than those of the paid newspapers. Considering the above, this study focuses mainly on breast cancer metaphors employed in TVCs and newspapers.

In Hong Kong, despite the fact that breast cancer is the third most common cancer, after lung cancer and colorectum cancer (Hong Kong Cancer Fund [HKCF], 2012), its media coverage is disproportionately high. Searching with the keyword 癌 (*ngaam4*, cancer) in the online newspaper database Wisenews, there is a total of 9385 cancer-related entries in the five major Chinese-language tabloid newspapers in Hong Kong (including *Metro Daily*, *am730*, *Headline Daily*, *Sky Post*, and *Sharp Daily*) from 2002 to 2014. Within these 9385 entries, 1291 mention lung cancer, 685 mention colorectum cancer, but 2273 mention breast cancer. The coverage of breast cancer is also much more frequent than the 560 entries of cervix cancer, another sex-specific cancer. To identify the prevalent metaphors used in the local Chinese-language newspapers, a pilot study was conducted. Focusing on the substitution metaphors in Maier and Shibles' list, news articles which contain the phrase “乳癌是” (*jyu3ngaam4 si6*, breast cancer is) are collected from Wisenews. The 921 news articles published in 2000 to 2014 are then tabulated, categorized and analyzed accordingly. These articles were mostly on the pages of local news or health news, some in world news, columns, and entertainment news. Filtering the literal descriptions of breast cancer, it is obvious that the two most common types of metaphors are (1) the martial metaphor (in which the patient has to battle against cancer as if it is a killer or an enemy) and (2) the spectral metaphor (in which the patient's cancer experience is like encountering a devil and/or having a nightmare). This result is also consistent with the major metaphors used in the tabloids which will be elaborated in Part 5 of this paper.

Besides the more textual metaphors in newspapers, the images in TVCs are also worth a closer examination. These advertisements aim at raising the awareness of breast cancer in the city. As these are advertisements produced by concerned groups such as Hong Kong Cancer Fund (HKCF) and Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation (HKBCF), they are supposed to be more aware of the political awareness in terms of portraying breast cancer. To set the context of the discussion, and also to compare and contrast the breast cancer metaphors in newspapers, Part 4 will categorize and briefly analyze the campaign advertisements shown in the local television channels. If metaphor is a “context deviation” (Maier, & Shibles, 2010, p.2), this paper is a critical review of how these deviations can be understood and questioned contextually centring on the metaphors of breast cancer in post-millennium Hong Kong.

4 Breast Cancer Awareness Campaigns on Television

A contextualized analysis of language used to metaphorize breast cancer in Hong Kong could probably begin with a scrutiny of metaphors used in breast cancer awareness campaigns. Unlike the breast cancer activism in Euro-American countries, the breast cancer awareness campaigns in Hong Kong are still developing. Having endeavoured

to support breast cancer patients for half a decade, HKCF launched the first large-scale breast cancer awareness campaign, Pink Revolution, in 2001 (HKCF, 2015). It has become an annual campaign every October. It was not until 2005 and 2007 that the Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation and Hong Kong Hereditary Breast Cancer Family Registry were founded respectively.

One advantage of the late establishment of local breast cancer support groups is that they could learn from the Euro-American models and avoid repeating some of the mistakes. In the United States, for instance, the activism has grown into pink ribbon culture, as Gayle A. Sulik (2012) terms it. To Sulik, the American pink ribbon culture is problematic because it gives an illusion that the movement is one single consensual force, avoids medical controversies, and has turned into a form of cause-marketing. What is worse, its “brand name” and profit motives disseminate the masculine ethos embedded in the war imagery of cancer, which in turns reinforce a stereotypical pink femininity and the she-roic model. Barbara Ehrenreich (2009) also criticizes that the over-emphasis of positive thinking in the States is jeopardizing breast cancer patients. It may or may not empower women with breast cancer, but it does encourage women to blame themselves and disavow what is happening. Compared with the thriving American pink ribbon culture, breast cancer awareness campaigns in Hong Kong are still budding.

Even though breast cancer, as suggested in Part 3, has already had the highest visibility in the mass media, there are only few TVCs which actually broadcasted in the free television stations over the decade. In these advertisements, the imagery is more focused on the breast than cancer. Despite borrowing the pink femininity prevalent in the States, these advertisements barely touch upon the war metaphors, but convey their messages in creative and localized ways.

4.1 Pink Ladies

Adopting the pink ribbon symbol, the breast cancer awareness campaigns in Hong Kong also adopts pink as its symbolic colour and its pink femininity. In Hong Kong, the colour pink has been preloaded with meanings similar to those in the States. It is often associated with “softness, innocence, dependence, and virtue of girlhood and true womanhood” (Sulik, 2012, p.90). Although the pink ribbon cause-marketing is not as prosperous or popular in Hong Kong as it is in the States, campaigners in Hong Kong has been using a similar strategy, such as holding the “Shop for Pink” activity, in gaining its visibility. Pink becomes the key colour in almost all breast cancer awareness activities during the Pink Revolution in October.

One prominent series of TVC featured the Chinese-American singer Coco Lee. Coco Lee has been the Pink Ambassador of the Pink Revolution since 2012. In the advertisement, Lee, who stands in front of the camera, wears a solid pantone pink T-shirt. While she is speaking in the front, twenty women in pale pink T-shirts joined her at the back. Together with Lee, these twenty-one women formed a triangular shape. In another poster of this series, these women stand on a slope, forming a triangle with Lee at the vertex being the leader of the group, to imitate revolution propagandas in history. This revolution implication is much diluted in the TVC. There is also no trace of sadness, threat, terror or anxiety in it. All women in the advertisement look conformed

to the feminine gender normative, smiling, and more importantly, double-breasted. It is hard to tell whether they are breast cancer patients, survivors or not. Featuring a celebrity, the advertisement calls for self-examination of the breasts. And this featuring of celebrity has been consistent in the 2010s, HKBCF invited Coco Lee, Vivian Chow, and Fala Chen as its spokespersons in different years. When they attended functions of the Pink Revolution, they always dressed in pink.

The campaigns are overwhelmed by pink. The TVCs, leaflets, posters, souvenirs, the fonts on these materials and so on are all in different pink colours. However, the use of pink in breast cancer awareness campaigns also “references society that celebrates women’s breasts as the principal symbols of womanhood, motherhood, and female sexuality” (Sulik, 2012, p.15). The colour may be soothing to some, but irritating to some others. It is at the same time downplaying and arousing viewers’ fear and grief. As revealed by the slogan “Don’t wait for the alarm” in this advertisement, or images of alarms in other promotional advertisements and materials, cancer is considered to be a danger or a threat in women’s breasts.

4.2 Red Alarms

A pair of alarms is another prevailing metaphor in the Pink Revolution. There are two alarms putting side by side each other. Sometimes, they are put in front of a woman’s bosom. Sometimes, they are on a bra. This metaphor has been used since the 2000s. It appeared on posters, newsletters and television advertisement of the campaign in 2009. For instance, in the opening ceremony of the Pink Revolution 2009, the tagline of the year was “You can’t buy a warning system for breast cancer, so self-check regularly” (HKCF, 2009, para. 2). That also echoes to that in 2006 that “Until your breasts come with an alarm system, check regularly” (Macleod, 2007). The campaigner seemed to have used these alarms to alarm the viewers to beware of these invisible threatening alarms in the breasts.

Though the image of alarms is not particularly outstanding in the TVCs, it is usually there in the last one or two shots of the advertisements. Its connotation is there in other advertisements such as the 2010 TVC “Unhook Your Bra and Check Regularly”. This advertisement shows women of different hairstyles, body shapes, ages and sizes unhooking their bras and reminding another woman to do the same. Besides the mentioned tagline, its English voice-over goes: “Every woman is at risk of breast cancer. Remind your friends and family. Early detection saves life.” The Chinese version, nonetheless, plays with the multiple meanings of the word 解 (*gai2*). When the women are unhooking their bras, *gai2* takes the meaning of “unfasten”. When the voice-over asked “點解” (*dim2gai2*), the character takes the double meaning of “unhook” and “explain”, this compound word means both “the way of unhooking” and “why”. When the voice-over reads the two lines of red words on the back of one woman, the compound word 解脫 (*gai2tyut3*) means “to put an end to; free from”. To what does the unhooking of the bra put an end? What could this unhooking of the bra free the woman from? The action could put an end to and free the woman from the 危機 (*ngai4gei1*, the danger and risk). This danger or risk of course refers to that of breast cancer.

Breast cancer is, as the verb *gaai2tyut3* is often collocated with, suffering and hardship to which one needs to put an end. The red alarms in the last shot of the TVC are those commonly used in schools and buildings. In schools, these red alarms are used for signaling the start and end of class, but they are also used to signal immediate retreat from an emergency such as a fire as they are used in other buildings. The metaphor of the red alarms implies the breasts as a site of danger and risk, and breast cancer as a menace to women. Even though this imagery of alarms is used by some tabloid media and netizens to analogize the shape of the breasts of some women celebrities, this imagery is more regarded to a sign of warning to women in the context of the Pink Revolution. Besides using these pink ladies and red alarms, are there more creative and localized ways of promoting breast cancer awareness?

4.3 Fruit & Mahjong

The latest TVC of Pink Revolution 2014 and another TVC by HKCF offer two different metaphors, fruit and mahjong, which are closer to the daily life of Chinese women in Hong Kong. A 30-second TVC might be too short to put forward any medical controversy, but these two TVCs show two very different emphases of the campaigners, HKCF and HKBCF.

In the Pink Revolution 2014 TVC, the breast self-examination (BSE) is metaphorized as choosing fruit. Most Chinese women used to touch and press the fruit when they want to choose which fruit to buy in a market or supermarket. This TVC shows top shots of two oranges, two watermelons, two pears, two peaches, two grapefruits, two pomelos, and two apples. The two fruits are put horizontally next to each other. Each of these fruits are placed in a way that either its pedicel or calyx is faced upward, resembling the nipples. There are pairs of hands touching, pressing or tapping the fruits like they are feeling if the fruits are in a good condition. Viewers can tell from the accessories, say, a wedding ring on the finger or a jade bracelet around the wrist, and skin of the different pairs of hand to tell the different age groups of women this TVC and those it targets. The voice-over reads: “Check, check, check. Check your breasts like you check the fruit.” The different fruits denote the different sizes and shapes of women’s breasts. Some viewers may have erotic or scaring association, but the background and overall tone of the TVC is quite light-hearted. Like the two series of TVCs mentioned earlier in this part, Pink Revolution reiterates the need of BSE. Yet, HKBCF finds BSE not suffice.

Despite its same slogan “Early detection saves life” with the Pink Revolution, HKBCF calls for also medical check-up and mammography screening. In HKBCF’s TVC starring Teresa Mo, three women are playing mahjong together. The roles of all three characters, representing middle-aged women of different class and education backgrounds, are played by Mo. When the woman who resembles a lower-middle class, less educated housewife is about to win by 自摸 (*zi6mol*, self-draw), another woman stops her and suggests the winner-to-be to seek help from medical experts. Seconding the suggestion, the third woman turns the mahjong lamp to the first woman, saying that it would be more secured to 照 (*ziu3*). The verb *ziu3* again takes its double meaning of “light up (with the lamp)” and “scan (in a mammography screening). The second woman wearing lots of jewels and the third woman in business attire represent a

wealthy woman and a career woman respectively. The next shot shifted to a breast health centre where there is a registered nurse from HKBCF giving advice to the viewers the three ways of breast check. As *zi6* means “self”, and *mol* means “touch”. The Cantonese terminology is a homonym meaning “touching by oneself”, thus in this case, referring to BSE. As spelt out in the concluding remarks of the “three” women, the message HKBCF conveys in this TVC is clearly that women should not venture and put herself at the risk of breast cancer merely by BSE, it is also necessary to go to the professional and non-profit-making Breast Health Centre to undergo medical check-up and mammography screening.

The two TVCs are neither combative nor offensive. The plots of both TVCs try to draw closer to the everyday experience of local Chinese women. Only when viewers read between the lines, can they discern the different agendas of the two campaigners. As a matter of fact, it comes no surprise that HKBCF focuses a lot more on biomedical means in checking the breasts since its founder Dr. Polly Cheung is the most well-known, and often commended as the top, breast oncologist in Hong Kong. Despite HKBCF’s advocacy of a population-wide breast cancer screening programme to all women in the city, Hong Kong lacks discussion of the screening, not to mention any debate about its limitations and risks (Sulik, 2012, pp.171-195). One could certainly go further and argue that the fruit metaphor implies a breast with malignant tumours is like an unwanted rotten or problematic fruit, or that the mahjong metaphor objectifies the women’s breast to be one subject to others’ fondle. It is true that relating women to the role of housewife or mahjong lovers is stereotyping in some sense, but it is no denying that these creative manifestations are more empowering, easily identified and effective representations than the girlish pink revolutionaries or the menacing red alarms in the breasts.

5 A “Self vs. Other” Paradox

Unlike the more female-centred, creative, and diverse metaphors in the TVCs, metaphors in newspapers are more of a cliché. Whereas those in the TVCs focus more on encouraging early detection as prevention, those in newspapers intimidate readers with scare tactics. What is more, while the TVCs portray breast cancer as if it is a problem from oneself, newspapers portray it as a “disease of the Other” (Sontag, 2002, p.69). In Hong Kong, breast cancer metaphors are less related to insanity, natural disasters (Bowker, 1996), a bodhisattva, sports events, a stage performance or weather (Chiu, 2015), but they share similar martial and spectral metaphors.

In both the pilot study of all Chinese newspapers and the study of the free tabloids, the martial metaphor and spectral metaphor are very common. Although these metaphors do not necessarily make up a big percentage in the tabloids, they are very common in the paid newspapers. If biomedicine is manufacturing antagonistic social categories of health and illness (Herzlich, 1995, p.155), these metaphors in newspapers, when juxtaposed with those of the TVCs, create a paradoxical story in understanding breast cancer in Hong Kong.

5.1 The Martial Metaphor: A War against the Killer, the Enemy, and the Threat

Among the various metaphors, “the killer” metaphor has been the most prevalent over time. Searching with the keyword 乳癌 (*jyu3ngaam4*, breast cancer) in Wisenews, the character 抗 (*kong3*, defend, resist and fight) appears in 260 entries, and the noun 殺手 (*saat3sau2*, killer) appears in 106 entries in the Chinese tabloid newspapers from 2002 to 2014. Related words such as 戰 (*zin3*, fight or combat), 勝 (*sing3*, win) and 威脅 (*wai1hip3*, threat), 敵 (*dik6*, enemy) could be found in 72, 53, 56 and 15 entries respectively. Among the above, the killer metaphor is no stranger to many. In the early 2000s, there was a widely circulated TVC on the prevention of cervical cancer again starring Teresa Mo. In the video, a male sniper is targeting women of all ages. The women run away for life. This TVC has been very penetrating. Even though the same metaphor is not used in the TVCs of breast cancer awareness campaigns, the referent to cancer as killer extends to also breast cancer.

This killer metaphor often appears at the beginning the paragraph as a catchy phrase, highlighting the mortality rate of breast cancer. Even the sentence that follows explains that early detection could save a woman from being “killed”, the impression that cancer is lethal and violent would already be imprinted in the readers’ minds. As cancer is commonly known as a 絕症 (*zyut6zing3*, terminal disease), the disease is easily associated with 絕望 (*zyut6mong6*, despair), thus confirmed diagnosis of cancer is like a death sentence. In view of its largely sex-specific patients, breast cancer is most of the time deemed as a killer targeting women (女性殺手). Interestingly though, some journalists refer to it as 師奶殺手 (*sillaai1saat3sau2*, killer of matronly housewives), while some write it as 女殺手 (*neoi5saat3sau2*, woman killer). In fact, *sillaai1saat3sau2* is often used to describe an actor to who is very popular among the matronly women audience. The appropriation of *sillaai1saat3sau2* in this context is then turning the referent from a figure to one whom women are drawn, to another extreme – a killer from whom women have to escape. What is more interesting is the naming of breast cancer as *neoi5saat3sau2*. *Neoi5saat3sau2* was known to be a very popular movie heroine Lady Bond (Connie Chan Po-chu) in the 1960s Hong Kong. Lady Bond was no femme fatale, but was like a female Robin Hood who was brave, smart and skilful. This reduction of *neoi5saat3sau2* into a threat that spreads negativity is quite sarcastic and dismisses this powerful positive woman figure.

The second and third common metaphors go to the threat (*wai1hip3*) and the enemy (*dik6*). What is breast cancer threatening? It is threatening the women’s health, femininity, female identity and even their lives. Besides killer of women, breast cancer is also described as women’s 敵人 (enemy), 大敵 (mortal enemy), 公敵 (public enemy) and 天敵 (natural enemy). “Enemy” is often regarded as hostile, threatening, aggressive and invasive. This saying seems to have established the fact that breast cancer is female-specific (which is not the truth), and that women are destined to confront this enemy by the law of the nature. In order to be safe from harm, women need to fight against this cancer. It is neither the disease nor the woman who initiates the war. It is when the woman is diagnosed with a malignant tumour that the doctor declares the war. The medical discourse “enlists” the woman to be a “warrior” to combat her threatening enemy, breast cancer the killer. The aim of this mission is to

戰勝 (*zin3sing3*, conquer) the cancer. It is no joke when looking closely at the rhetoric used to describe breast screening as a defence against cancer (HKBCF, 2013), the treatment process as 抗癌 (*kong3ngaam4*, resisting, defending against cancer), the cancer drugs as 抗癌藥 (*kong3ngaam4joek6*, drugs defending against cancer), and those women who have successfully defeated breast cancer as 勇士 (*jung5si6*, shero, heroin) or 戰士 (*zin3si6*, warrior).

This martial metaphor or military metaphor has been heavily criticized by Sontag. Along with this martial metaphor, cancer is reinforced as “ruthless, implacable, and predatory” (Sontag, 2002, p.63). As cancer is “invasive”, cancer patients must be subject to more radical surgical intervention, more powerful radiotherapy and chemotherapy (Sontag, 2002, pp.64-66). Even if these brutal treatments “wreak havoc” of healthy body cells, it is a necessary military strategy. Employing the language and mentality of warfare would yield a view that the killer can be eliminated, the enemy can be defeated and the threat be dissolved if following the tactics of the wise commanders, in this case, the doctors. However, the causes and treatments of cancer are still not yet fully known. And it is this mysterious facet that brings cancer to another metaphorical category.

5.2 The Spectral Metaphor: A Nightmare of the Devil

While these war-related metaphors are prevailing, the spectral metaphor ranks second. The metaphors of 魔 (*mol*, devil) and 夢 (*mung6*, dream) appear in 81 and 7 articles. As illustrated by the title of a talk, “「乳」你共戰癌魔” (“*jyu5 nei3 gong6zin3 ngaam4mol*, Battling the cancer devil with you(r breast)) by Union Hospital in October 2008, 癌魔 (*ngaam4mol*, the cancer devil) is another common signifier of cancer, and another figure the patients have to “combat”. Many news articles in the paid newspaper also call breast cancer a 噩夢 (*ngok3mung6*, nightmare) or 夢魘 (*mung6jim2*, nightmare) to women. A nightmare is frightening and unpleasant. It is a bad dream invokes bad or even terrifying feelings. In contrary to the war that could conquer with proper strategies, a nightmare cannot be defeated by rationality. No one can ever guarantee how not to have nightmares or how to consciously wake up from a nightmare.

This devil metaphor is similar to but not the same as the killer or enemy metaphors. Whereas the killer and enemy appear to be more predictable and avoidable, the devil is more invisible, mysterious and demonic, thus, less predictable and manageable. Some even figuratively describes the threat of cancer is like an extending devil’s claw (魔爪). If cancer is caused by abnormal cell growth or mutation, this metaphor takes up its unregulated, incoherent and ferociously energetic dimension. It is, in Sontag’s (2012) words, “ruthless, implacable, predatory” (p.63). This monstrous imagination of breast cancer is somehow a provocation to the modern biomedical interpretation of breast cancer. Imagination like this may lead the patients prone to superstitious or supernatural association, for example, the disease is a penalty of affluent or unhealthy lifestyle or karma. Since this scary metaphor presupposed the existence of an uninhibited supernatural devil, patients can only base on faith, rather than rationality, to resist and to wake up from this awful nightmare. To many patients, this could be the faith in God,

a deity and/or biomedicine. However strong their faith is, the phantom or spectre of cancer may still linger in the prognosis.

In addition to this cancer devil, there is another devil that is familiar to doctors and patients of breast cancer – the Red Devil (紅魔鬼). Red Devil is the nickname of Doxorubicin (also known as Adriamycin), a drug used in cancer chemotherapy. Doxorubicin earns this nickname due to its red colour and strong side effects of nausea, vomiting, hair fall, and even heart failure. To fight against a devil with a devil is more like a fairy tale than real, but this is what actually realizes in treating breast cancer. The devil metaphor takes a detour but is back to the martial metaphor. Women with breast cancer need to conquer the killer, the enemy, and the devil. Cancer is thus not a disease of the self, but a “disease of the Other” (Sontag, 2002, p.69). Having read these martial and spectral metaphors, what should not be neglected is that the woman body is the actual site of contestation, or battleground, of both biomedicine and language.

6 The Rock and the Milk

Breast cancer in Cantonese is *jyu2ngaam4* 乳癌, with its first character literally means milk, the second, rock. Compared to the many cultural meanings of the breasts in the Western civilization illustrated by Marilyn Yalom (1998), the breasts in Hong Kong are mostly associated with lactation, symbols of femininity and sex appeal. In other words, they symbolize the role of mother, the womanhood and sexual desirability. When the rock meets the milk, the cancerous cells in the breast could be disturbing. They are thought to disturb and threaten the woman’s breastfeeding function, femininity and attractiveness. This fear could be further discerned from understanding the deeper cultural meaning of the disease.

6.1 The “Rocky” Illness

The martial and spectral metaphors, despite its heightened severity, could also be applied to many other illnesses. There is in fact an implicit metaphor underlying the word “cancer. Although the English term “cancer” is widely used in Hong Kong, most people barely know its Greco-Latino etymological meaning “crab”. Whether this name given to the disease is because of that the metastasis of cancerous cells that is associated with the movement of crabs, or that the abnormal swelling of tumours extrudes like a crab leg, this sense of crab is lost when it is used in Hong Kong. Instead, the English term “cancer” is used more as a euphemism of its more terrifying Chinese term.

The entry “cancer” was translated as 癌 in the 1923 edition of *Webster's English-Chinese Dictionary* (英漢雙解韋氏大辭典). According to *Hanyu Da Zidian* (漢語大字典, *Great Compendium of Chinese Characters*) and *Hanyu Da Cidian* (漢語大詞典, *Comprehensive Chinese Word Dictionary*), in a letter written by Lu Xun, a leading figure of modern Chinese literature, cancer was already translated as 癌 in 1925. It is believed that it is a translation imported from Japan in the early 19th century. In Putonghua, the word 癌 is read as *ai2*, but its original pronunciation should be *yan2*, which is still widely used in Taiwan Mandarin. As the sound *yan2* is the same as the

word “inflammation” (炎), the editors of *Xinhua Zidian* (新華字典 “New Chinese Dictionary”) made reference to some other Chinese dialects and modified the pronunciation of 癌 as *ai2* to prevent confusion (Huang, 2002).

Cancer, in Cantonese, is *ngaam4zing3* (癌症). The word *zing3* (症) is the root denoting illness or disease in general. It is the word *ngaam4* (癌) that is threatening. The radical of this word is 疒, which again is referred to as related to sickness. Inside this radical is 巖, a very rarely used character meaning a cliff, which also gives the whole word its sound *ngaam4*. In the character 癌, there are three mouths (口) above a hill (山) bracketed by the radical of sickness. It looks as if a monster with three mouths is devouring the mountain. What is more, the sound of this character *ngaam4* is a homophone of the noun “岩” (*ngaam4*, rock) and its extended adjective “岩巉” (*ngaam4caam4*, jagged). Unlike the creeping movement of the crab, the imagery of *ngaam4* is rather static and immovable. While the English meaning implies its mobility, its Chinese character and Cantonese pronunciation gives a sense of riveting, fixation, stationary.

Despite the differences in mobility, cancer still shares similar implications in a political context as it does in the American context. Like what Sontag mentions, describing a political event as cancer implies it as disturbing, horrible and wicked. For instance, councilor Longhair Leung Kwok-hung attributed the unsupportive take of the late Szeto Wah, who was fighting last-stage lung cancer at that time, to the Five Constituencies Referendum in 2010 to Szeto’s “cancer cells spreading to his brain”. This remark stirred up much controversy as this was a hurtful insult to the sick (“‘Long Hair’ defiant,” 2010). Another example goes to the petition of 500 doctors in Hong Kong describing the Umbrella Movement in 2014 as cancer that is nibbling away at the city’s core values. Even though groups of medical students petitioned against such a claim and tried to do justice to the movement, they tend to retain the sense of malignancy and uncontrollability of cancer cells (HKUMedPRCG, 2014). Descriptions of a political event as cancer often encourage fatalism, invite, incite and justify violent measures to be taken (Sontag, 2002, pp.80-84). Such problematic descriptions stigmatize not only the politician or the political movement, but also the disease and cancer patients (Wong, 2014). Cancer as a disease is of course undesirable, but how do these negative labels manifest? What if it happens in the woman’s breast?

6.2 The Milky Rocky Road

As suggested earlier in this part, the women’s breasts is a symbol of womanhood, motherhood and sexual desirability. Therefore, when there is a malignant tumour in the breast, the way one deals with it will possibly affect her femininity, maternity and sexual appeal, and subsequently, her woman identity. The pink ladies, red alarm, fruit, mahjong, martial and spectral metaphors illustrated above do not merely affect the perception of breast cancer, but also how breast cancer could be or should be treated. Compared with the women shown in the cervical cancer awareness TVCs who escape (as in Teresa Mo’s TVC) or box against cancer (as in Kay Tse’s TVC), women with breast cancer are going through a similar but different experience.

Retaining femininity seems to be the key theme of the breast cancer awareness TVCs. The overwhelmingly pink campaign reminds women the necessity of being feminine. It reminds women that they become deviant when they are diagnosed with breast cancer (Herzlich, 1995, p.155). Therefore, women should seek and accept treatment, more precisely, biomedical treatment, in order to resume their femininity, “reducing that deviance and reintegrating [...] into the rounds and exchanges of social conformity” (Herzlich, 1995, p.154). Early detection thus not only saves life, but also their breasts and femininity. It is only by saving their lives, breasts and femininity that they could fulfill their duties and pleasure as women: choosing fruits for the family and playing mahjong. What would most people do if they have found a rotten fruit or drawn an unwanted mahjong? If there is a rotten fruit, people may eliminate it, choose not to buy it or throw it away. If there is a bruise or a rotten node in the fruit, one may bite it off or cut it away. If one draws an unwanted mahjong, again, one may discard it. When the breast is analogized as a fruit or a mahjong, the most logical way to deal with the tumour is to root it out (by invasive means) and discard it. When imagining the breasts as alarms, the breasts are laden with a sense of fright and danger. It also becomes one that is only fitted on the body, but not a part of a more holistic body. The breasts are then like a burden and time bomb for women. Women should disarm the bomb by all means. In these cases, the breasts are largely objectified and alienated. This shows an interesting displacement of the meaning of the breasts. Once the breast is diagnosed with cancer, it is detaching from the assigned sexually specific cultural meanings: the feminine, the sexy and the motherly. Instead, it re-connects with the biological self, its physical constitution such as its glands and tissue. When stripped of the sexual imagination of the breasts and her own self, the woman will need to seek medical intervention, striving to regain the breast’s cultural meanings, to put an end to her deviant position, and to be a normative feminine “woman” again.

The medical intervention women with breast cancer seek would very likely be the biomedical intervention, including surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy. How can these biomedical interventions be related to metaphors? The martial metaphor and spectral metaphor prevalent in newspapers may offer justifications to them. Furthering what has been discussed in Part 5, fighting cancer is thought of as battling a killer, an enemy or a devil. Along this train of thought, women with breast cancer have to defend, combat and fight against cancer. During this battle, they have to listen to doctors, who are the professional, knowledgeable, experienced and rational, so as to beat, conquer and defeat cancer. In order to effectively kill, eliminate and eradicate all cancer cells, women should “slash, burn and poison” these bad cells (Eisenstein, 2001, p.112). Being threatened with losing their lives and/or femininity by this terminal disease, breast cancer patients are enlisted to the war against cancer. Those who have faith in biomedicine need professional advice, strategies and tactics to fight this war, going through mastectomy, radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Those who have faith in a religion will seek spiritual guidance and teaching to beat the devil. A mixed use of the martial and spectral metaphors is common too. It could be integrated with also the journey metaphor to become a sentence like “In her cancer-fighting journey, this woman bravely conquers the cancer devil” (這位女士在抗癌路上勇敢地擊退癌魔). At the end of the story, the woman warrior would be either a winner or a loser, beating cancer, or being beaten by cancer. Considering these largely masculine traits and

figures in writing cancer, women may find it hard to identify with this masculine position and confidently “battle” cancer.

When fighting breast cancer, a woman not merely fights for a healthy body, but she fights also for being a “normal” woman. “Since breast cancer places the social integrity of a woman’s body in jeopardy,” Sulik (2012) asserts, “restoring the feminine body (or at least normalizing its appearance) is a sign of victory in the war on breast cancer” (p.15). This is also what makes breast cancer different from other sex-specific cancers like cervical cancer and prostate cancer. Comparing with cervical cancer (which is less visible after surgery) and prostate cancer (which is common mostly among older men), breast cancer is increasingly common in pre-menopausal Chinese women and could transform women’s appearance after mastectomy. In their book, Augé and Herzlich point out that illness “incarnates our conflictive relationship with society” (p.12). Re-reading the metaphors of breast cancer can be an opportunity to examine such conflictive relationship, to liberate the illness and women from disempowerment, and to elicit creativity and imagination to cope with the illness.

7 Battling against the War, Dreaming without Nightmares

Other than the above mentioned metaphors of warfare and beyond rationality, some doctors also refer to breast cancer as a metropolitan disease (*dou1si5beng6* 都市病, *sing5si5beng5* 城市病, *sin1zeon3se3wui2beng5* 先進社會病, *yin6doi6fa3sang1wut6dik1git3gwo2* 現代化生活的結果). In their words, it is because of the modern Westernized lifestyle and diet that cause breast cancer. A doctor even claims breast cancer as a disease mostly strikes the wealthy. This saying is definitely overlooking the varied accessibility of different classes to medical information and mammogram screening that would affect the statistics of breast cancer cases. Nevertheless, this association of breast cancer to the city is not without its reasons. The city is itself carcinogenic. In William Florence’s (2012) *Breasts: A Natural and Unnatural History*, she provides a vivid account of how women’s breasts are loaded with environmental toxins and chemical exposures. In the newspaper articles clipped, there are also scattered mentioning of radiation and body-care products such as antiperspirant could increase breast cancer risks. In spite of that, these external causes are most of the time downplayed. This in turn strengthens the delusion that cancer is largely autopathogenic.

If cancer is an autopathogenic disease, it is a disease of oneself. Like what Stacey (1997) says, “cancer is the self at war with the self” (p.62). Yet, re-reading the military and nightmares metaphors above, there is actually a process of othering the self in the metaphorization of breast cancer. The very aggressive killer and enemy are in fact not external, but within the body. The very mentality of elimination and killing of the aliens seems to be at false. The patient and cancer cells are not necessarily a mutually exclusive either-or option. It is not that either the patient kills the cancer cells or the cancer cells kill the patient. The imagination of cancer cells as the other invading the self does not really fit in here. The seemingly more rational military formulation of cancer turns out to be no less fictional than the nightmare one. Leaving behind this creation of a fictitious other, the combative gesture in both metaphors may not defend

women but make them even more vulnerable. Perhaps a symbiotic relationship could be possible in imagining the self and the cancer cells. Kwan (2013), a breast cancer survivor, suggests living with cancer in harmony like Waltz dancing. This dance metaphor does not appeal to her oncologist. The oncologist, admitting the possibility to live with cancer, insists the malignancy of cancer cells and the necessity to eradicate as many cancer cells as possible by referencing again to the military terms (pp.16-18). Breast cancer is largely, though not exclusively, a women-specific disease. There are not many Lady Bonds in Hong Kong. Most women are brought up unfamiliar to fighting or battling. Considering the feminine gender normative, women might not be able to identify themselves with the often masculine subject position in the metaphors elucidated above. When confronting cancer the killer, the enemy and/or the devil, these metaphors cannot equip them with the will strong enough to cope with the challenges that follows. Instead, senses of powerlessness and helplessness take charge. All these do more harm than help.

Is it possible to talk about breast cancer without using any metaphors? It is, but as said in Part 2, the talk may not be effective especially to laymen. Metaphors are crucial. Metaphors facilitate human's understanding of a new concept by relating to, compare and contrasting others. What is more, "the categories of metaphors reveal associations between control (or loss of control) issues and the complex composite of familiar, ordered thought patterns, emotional reactions, and conditioned responses, all of which are parts of a meaning-making process" (Bowker, 1996, p.100). Medical scientists make hypotheses and execute their experiments based on medical literature and theories, among which many of them could be written based on the authors' metaphorical understanding of their observation. When a research study is published, it would be circulated online and offline. Its results could be used to support or argue against a claim, and subsequently publicized by awareness campaigns and the mass media. Whenever there is a press release by the government or a campaigner, there would be coverage of breast cancer in different newspapers. As observed from the newspaper clippings, the choice of words, metaphors and rhetoric used in these newspaper articles from different press companies are very much similar. These articles are very likely paraphrased from the same campaigner's press release they are given or what are used by doctors in interviews, written in the government press release and advertised in awareness campaigns websites or pamphlets. In view of this, the government and campaigners should be more discreet in formulating breast cancer metaphors to make sure that they are empowering and not intimidating.

To distinguish itself from the dominant biomedical discourse, many Chinese medicine practitioners have adopted the term 頑症 *waan4zing3* to substitute the biomedical term *ngaam4zing3*. This use is most commonly seen in tabloid newspaper commercials of Chinese medicine products. Here, the character *waan4* replaced the immovable jagged *ngaam4*, the sickness gains a refreshed sense of its being stubborn, probably "mischievous" and harder to deal with, which distances itself from the despairing association to terminal disease and death. This may be what Maier and Shibles (2010) suggest as therapeutic and/or elucidating metaphor (p.11). Other metaphors of the ways one should take to encounter cancer experience can also be found in Chinese books. These metaphors include reducing cancer cells by starving them, treating cancer cells like teaching and nurturing children, keeping fish, or encountering cancer like going on a journey. Some would also describe their cancer

experience as an adventure, an enlightening challenge or a wake-up call. Developing alternative metaphors, while keeping a critical distance from a compulsorily positive attitude to cancer, could possibly liberate breast cancer experience from a war or a nightmare.

8 Conclusion

[T]he stigmatised category produces the desire for complete transformation and yet its lingering presence ensures only partial displacement.

– Jackie Stacey, *Teratologies: A Cultural Study of Cancer*, 1997

The mass media heavily cite from doctors, counsellors and campaigners. Sontag (2002) says, “Illness is *not* a metaphor, and that the most truthful way of regarding illness – and the healthiest way of being ill – is one most purified of, most resistant to, metaphoric thinking” (p.3). Even though it is almost impossible to think and talk to patients without metaphors, there can be an examination of and liberation from the metaphors used in clinical settings, so as to calm, rather than incite, imagination. Healthcare workers, counsellors, family and friends of cancer patients could try to identify but respect patients’ metaphors, introduce and discuss with them more enabling alternative or parallel metaphors (Bowker, 1996, pp.101-102; Reisfield & Wilson, 2004, p.4027). Demarcating cancer as abnormal, uncontrollable and barbarian is, as a matter of fact, constructing and prioritizing a controllable “civilized” norm in this capitalist patriarchal city. If cancer is referred to as organic, freely grown and natural, it will definitely be perceived differently.

Many breast cancer metaphors in Hong Kong categorize. They categorize concepts such as “good cells vs. bad cells,” “benign tumour vs. malignant tumour,” “good breasts vs. bad breasts,” and even “normal woman vs. abnormal woman”. These dichotomies come with not just differentiation, but also stigmas. It is in this sense that metaphors and biomedicine are productive. They produce categories of the healthy and the ill, as well as the normal and the deviant (Herzlich, 1995; Foucault, 1997). The depictions of breast cancer in the Hong Kong mass media mostly resort to a war against a killer or a spectre. Even though cancer patients have medical professionals, family and friends as their comrade, the patients would at the end be the ones who own up all responsibilities and repercussions in case of unsuccessful treatments. Patients who have lost faith to themselves may, as what Sontag (2002) suggests, be trapped in despair and refuse biomedical treatments. Nonetheless, when patients have lost faith in biomedicine, they may choose to deviate from the biomedical procedures, seek alternative treatments with the hope to recover. That could be a turning point for them to reclaim their agency and rights (Herzlich, 1995, pp.168-169). Metaphors and language use can be inspiring, empowering and free from gendered implications rather than devastating, demonizing and stigmatizing. Illness is a continuous experience of an embodied self; it should not solely be represented by numbers and words in a clinical report. It is not a static, but a process.

In the process of encountering breast cancer, patients should not be confined by a few dominant metaphors. It is important to be aware of how breast cancer is manmade – it is culturally and socially constructed; it denies recognition of the female body

(Eisenstein, 2001, pp.100-101). In the case of Hong Kong, most media coverage of breast cancer helps reinforce the capitalist biomedical hegemony and points to mostly autopathogenic causes of cancer, downplaying the environmental and work-related causes. The martial and spectral metaphors of breast cancer in newspapers prevent women from fully informed and engaged in decision making and treatment processes. Together with the alarm metaphor, they also avoid women from understanding the bodies as a coherent whole. The metaphors of fruit, mahjong and exclusively pink campaign fortify women's "natural" duties as lactating and/or housekeeping mothers and sexually desirable wives. They also marginalize those who do not conform to the female gender normative, and overlook the fact that men too could experience breast cancer. Metaphors may and may not kill. They offer patients a sense of control in fact of uncertainties. Yet, metaphors could at the same time accommodate antithetical images and frame the perception and imagination of patients (Bowker, 1996, pp.100-101). Different models of metaphors remove and impose stigmas, liberate and limit the understanding and imagination of the disease in different ways. In order to ensure that patients could better understand what they are going through and make more informed choices, healthcare professionals, awareness campaigners and the government should all work towards liberating breast cancer from disempowering metaphors.

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A Study on Adjectival Complex Predicates in Mandarin Chinese

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Abstract. Chinese is an isolating language. It is often considered as a problematic language in cross-linguistic analyses, not only because of its exceptional behavior in a number of syntactic phenomena (Hawkins, 1994), but also the difficulties in distinguishing lexical classes (Cheung, 2006). In my study, I am going to explore some central issues concerning the verb-object adjectival compounds in Chinese Mandarin. In the course of my study, I am going to provide a structural analysis of a selected set of *verb-object*, or *verb-noun adjectives* in Chinese Mandarin with respect to their morphological structure and syntactic behavior. Finally, I am going to look at two possible explanations, namely the Distinctness View and the Spectrum View, in accounting for the exceptional cases we encounter in the course of discussion.

1 Introduction

Chinese is an isolating language. It is often considered as a problematic language in cross-linguistic analyses, not only because of its exceptional behavior in a number of syntactic phenomena (Hawkins, 1994), but also the difficulties in distinguishing lexical classes (Cheung, 2006). Moreover, some linguists think that Chinese only has two types of words, i.e. verbs and nouns, which are considered the most prominent word classes cross-linguistically (Cheung, 2006).

In my study, I am going to explore some central issues concerning the verb-object adjectival compounds in Chinese Mandarin. In the course of my study, I am going to provide a structural analysis of a selected set of *verb-object*, or *verb-noun adjectives* in Chinese Mandarin with respect to their morphological internal structure and syntactic behaviour. I am going to point out that the term ‘verb-object’ compound or VOC may not be an accurate name for the description of certain Chinese adjectives which are consisted of a verb and a noun, as well as their modification processes. Finally, I am going to look at two possible explanations, namely the Distinctness View and the Spectrum View, in accounting for the exceptional cases we encounter in the course of discussion.

2. The Nature of Verb-Object Compounds in Chinese

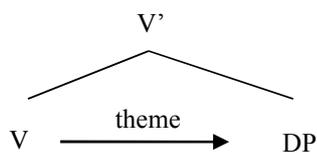
Generally speaking, there are six types of word formation patterns of compounds in Chinese. They are (1) coordinative, e.g. 美麗 /měilì/ (beautiful-beautiful) ‘beautiful’, (2) subject-predicate, e.g. “心急 /xīnjí/ (heart-anxious) ‘impatient’, (3) endocentric, e.g. 狠心 /hěnxīn/ (cruel-heart) ‘cruel’, (4) complementary, e.g. 漂亮 /piàoliàng/ (wash-bright) ‘beautiful’, (5) adding of prefixes or suffixes, e.g. 可愛 /kěài/ (able-love) ‘lovable’ and (6) verb-object, e.g. 吃力 /hěn chīli/ (very-eat-effort) ‘very hard’. In this paper, I am going to focus on the final type of compounds, namely verb-object compounds.

According to the description of verb-object compounds by Li and Thompson (1981), a verb-object compound or a VOC, “as its name indicates, is composed of two constituents having the syntactic relation of a verb and its direct object”. According to the definition given by Li and Thompson, the nominal constituent within a verb-object compound has the semantic role of patient or theme, for example, for the compound 傷心 /shāngxīn/ (hurt-heart) ‘sad’, ‘心 /xīn/ ‘heart’ is the patient of the action 傷 /shāng/ ‘hurt’.

2.1 The Nature of Nominal Object in Verb-Object Compounds

As Li and Thompson (1981) stated, a VOC is composed of a verbal and a nominal constituent with the syntactic relation of a verb and its direct object. The term VOC, or verb-object compounds has long been used to describe this type of compounds. However, the term VOC may not be accurate for describing the morphological construction of this type of compound. In this section, I am going to justify my view and suggest the name ‘verb-noun compound’ or ‘VNC’ for this type of compounds.

In the literature of transformation grammar, a DP or an NP gets its semantic role or theta role through internal assignment as demonstrated in the diagram below. According to Radford (1988), certain semantic roles, also known as theta role, are assigned to the arguments in a structure. The distribution of the semantic roles is determined by the verb within the syntactic structure. Syntactically speaking, an object has its theta-role assigned internally by the verb. The semantic role of an object is restricted to be either the patient or the theme.



Direct object or object (the term ‘object’ will be used in the following discussion) is also regarded as the second most prominent grammatical relation after the most prominent grammatical relation, subject, in grammatical relation hierarchy proposed by Keenan and Comrie, 1977). Semantically speaking, an object is the entity which typically undergoes the action or process denoted by the verb, and usually has a patient role. However, the syntactic behavior and expression of object varies across languages.

In some languages, the object relation is expressed in case-marking, e.g. English; whereas some languages express the object relation via agreement, e.g. Swahili .

Although understanding the semantic characteristic of objects helps in identifying the objects in a clause, we still need a structural or syntactic definition of what an object is. Being identified as a certain lexical class and one of the most prominent grammatical functions, objects in a language should behave similarly in certain syntactic tests. There's not yet a particular syntactic test which is sufficient enough to identify the object alone in a clause, and the problem in identifying the objects is especially obvious in Chinese. In what follows, I am going to give some syntactic tests on the Chinese objects.

2.1.1 Passivization

Passivization is one of the most widely used tests for objecthood. The agent argument in a transitive active clause is expressed as the subject while the patient argument is expressed as the object. An object in an active sentence can become the subject of the correspondent. In other words, the patient role becomes an active object to a passive subject, and the same time, the agent role is suppressed.

In Chinese, the passive is not expressed by a change of verb form, but overtly indicated by the word 被 /bèi/ with the patient argument raised to the subject position and the verb is put after the word 被 /bèi/. The agent argument is optionally put after the word 被 /bèi/. For example,

(2a) 他(A) 吃-了 (V) 那 件 蛋糕 (P) Tā chī-le nà jiàn dāngāo 3sg.MASC eat-perf. marker DET. piece cake 'He has eaten that piece of cake.'	(2b) 那 件 蛋糕(P) 被 吃-了 (V)。 Nà jiàn dāngāo bèi chī-le DET. piece cake pass.-part. eat-perf. marker 'That piece of cake has been eaten.'
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In the passive correspondent (2b), the patient or the object of the active correspondent 蛋糕 /dāngāo/ appears at the initial subject position, directly followed by the word 被 /bèi/. The verb 吃了 /chīle/ stands at the clause-final.

The above syntactic test of objecthood can also be used to examine the objecthood of the nominal constituent in a verb-object compound. If the morphological construction of the verb-object compounds is as what Li and Thompson described, i.e. 'they have the relation of the verb and its direct object', the nominal constituent should show consistent or similar result with any other object.

3a) 刺骨 cìgǔ *骨 被 刺了。 gǔ bèi cì le 'chilling' (pierce-bone): *Bone is pierced	3b) 知心 Zhīxīn *心被知了。 xīn bèi zhī le Intimate (know-heart): *Heart is known.
3c) 開心 Kāixīn *心 被 開 了。 xīn bèi kāi le Happy (open-heart): *Heart is opened.	3d) 悅人 Yuèrén *人 被 悅 了。 rén bèi yuè le Gratifying (happy-people): *People are pleased.

The passivization of nominal constituents of the above adjectives, i.e. (3a) to (3d) seems odd. The result shows that the nominal constituents do not behave like typical objects.

The nominal constituents of these compounds are not the direct objects of the verbal constituents. Thus, the description on these types of compounds as having a ‘verb + object’ relation is not very accurate.

However, the adjective 傷心/shāngxīn/ (hurt-heart) ‘sad’ seems to be an exception for the above passivization test as the passivization of the nominal constituent, i.e. 我(1sg)的(poss. part.) 心(heart) 被(pass. part.) 傷(hurt) 了(perf. marker)/Wǒ de xīn bèi shāng le/ ‘My heart is hurt’, is acceptable in Chinese. The abnormality of 傷心/shāngxīn/ (hurt-heart) ‘sad’ will be explained in the later section.

2.1.2 Preposing

In an unmarked sentence, a nominal object follows the verb. However, when we want to emphasize the object, we can prepose the nominal object by using the word 連/lián/ and 都/dōu/. Topicalization or *focalization* is a kind of preposing in Chinese. (Shyu, 1995).

(5a) 他 想 收集 垃圾。
Tā xiǎng shōují lājī
3sg.MASC want collect rubbish
‘He wants to collect rubbish.’

(5b) 他 **連** 垃圾 **都** 想 收集。
Tā lián lājī dōu xiǎng shōují
3sg.MASC **lian** rubbish **dou** want collect
‘He even wants to collect rubbish.’

The word 連/lián/ introduces the objects which are originated from the postverbal position to the preverbal position after 連/lián/. Unlike passivization, the introduction of the object from the postverbal to the preverbal position does not impose a constraint on psychological verbs and directional verbs. Thus, such object preposing construction serves as a better test to identify the objects in sentences. In what follows, I am going to apply the preposing test to the adjectival verb-object compounds and hence examine the objecthood of the nominal constituents in verb-object compounds.

(9a) 風 很 刺-骨。
Fēng hěn cì-gǔ
Wind very chill-bone
‘The wind chilled my bone’

(9ai) *風 **連** 骨 **都** 刺。
Fēng lián gǔ dōu cì
Wind **lian** bone **dou** pierce
*‘The wind even pierced my bones.’

- (9bi) 她 很 迷人。
 Tā hěn mírén
 3sg.FEM very charming
 ‘She is very charming.’
- (9bii) *她 連 人 都 迷。
 Tā lián rén dōu mí
 3sg.FEM *lián* people *dōu* charm
 *‘She even charms the people.’

Let us reconsider the definition of verb-object compounds proposed by Li and Thompson (1981). According to Li and Thompson (1981)’s description of VOCs, verb-object compounds are V+N constructions with the nominal constituents bears syntactic relation of direct objects of the verb constituents. In this account, we could predict the nominal constituents in this kind of compounds behave similarly with other objects in syntactic tests. In other words, nominal constituents should pass both the passivaization test and the preposing test, or at least one of them. However, the result from the above two tests contrasts with Li and Thompson (1981)’s description of VOCs. The nominal constituents of compounds with V+N constructions do not behave similarly as direct objects in both of the syntactic tests.

Following the *distributional* classification approach of Aarts (2001), entities do not show similar behaviour in sentential level and syntactic tests should not be regarded as the same grammatical category. As the nominal constituents in such V+N compounds do not have similar behaviour with other typical objects in syntactic tests, they should not be treated as *objects*. Accordingly, the term ‘verb-object compounds’ may not be an accurate name for compounds with V+N constructions.

2.2 Semantic Relation between the Verbal Constituent and the Nominal Constituent

As I have mentioned above at the beginning of this section, an object is syntactically restricted to be the theme or the patient. In other words, a ‘verb-object’ compound can only be either a ‘verb-patient’ or a ‘verb-theme’ compound. Considering the semantic roles is another means to describe the relation between a verb and a noun. According to Bresnan (2001:37), six semantic roles are assumed and these semantic roles form a thematic hierarchy. The six semantic roles are agent > benefactive/recipient > experiencer, instrument > patient/theme>locative.¹

In what follows, I am going to show that the nouns following the verbs in verb-noun compounds may bear a number of semantic roles. Consider the following compounds.

¹ For the purpose of this essay, I am going to treat patient and theme as two semantic roles instead one. The difference of these two semantic roles lies in the affectedness of the entity which undergoes the change by an action.

Verb + patient	Verb + theme	Verb + experiencer	V + location / goal
敗興/bàixìng/ (destroy-pleaseure) 吃力/chīlì/ (eat-effort) 奪目/duómù/ (take-eye) 傷心/shāngxīn/ (hurt-heart)	稱心/chènxīn/ (suit-preference) 拿手/náshǒu/ (take-hand) 忘我/wàngwǒ/ (forget-self)	感人/gǎnrén/ (impress-people) 惱人/nǎorén/ (annoy-people)	參天/cāntiān/ (reach-sky)

Compounds in the first column are composed of a verb and the patient that is affected by the action expressed by the verb. For example, the verbal constituent 敗/bài/ in 敗興 /bàixìng/ means ‘sweep away’, or more precisely in the composite form, ‘destroy’. The nominal constituent 興/xìng/ means ‘pleasure’, which is affected by the action of destroying.

Compounds in the second column have a structure of verb + theme. In the compound 扼要/èyào/, the nominal constituent 要/yào/ means ‘something important or the key’ while the verbal constituent 扼/è/ means ‘master’ or ‘grasp’. The composite form of the verbal and the nominal constituent means ‘grasping of the key’. ‘The key’ doesn’t undergoes any changes in the action, thus it is better to be understood as the theme, instead of the patient.

Compounds in the third column are composed by a verb and an experiencer. The nominal constituents of this type of adjectives are animate. For example, in the adjective 感人/gǎnrén/, the verbal constituent 感/gǎn/ means ‘touched’ or ‘moved’. The nominal constituent 人/ rén/ is the entity which undergoes the emotional process or state of ‘being touched’.

Compounds in the fourth column 參天/cāntiān/ has the structure of verb + location. The verbal 參/cān/ means ‘reaches’ while 天/tiān/ has an extended meaning of ‘a very high place’.

2.3 Verb-Object Compounds or Verb-Noun Compounds?

From the above analysis of the semantic relation of the verbal constituents and the nominal constituents of the selected set of adjectives, we can see that the nominal constituents can bear other semantic roles or theta roles other than only the theme or the patient. Together with the test of syntactic objecthood that we have done in Section 2.1 and Section 2.2, we can conclude that the nominal constituents in VOCs are not necessarily the direct objects of the verbal constituents and hence the name verb- object compounds or VOCs is not very accurate as it downplays the complexity of the relations possible between the nouns and the verbs in V+N compounds. Thus, I suggest that ‘Verb-Noun Compound’ or VNC may be a more appropriate term for the description of this type of compound as it allows more flexibility in the semantic relation of the nominal constituents.

3 Properties of Verb-Noun Compounds

One of the differences between the syntactic properties VO phrases and VN compounds lies in the degree of ionization. In this section, I am going to compare the difference in degree of ionization of VN compounds from VO phrases and verbal verb-noun compounds. I am going to adopt Chao's (1968) definition of ionization² in the course of discussion.

3.1 Degree of Ionization of Verb-Object Phrases and Verb-Noun Compounds

In most cases, the object in Chinese normally directly follows the verbs, as in 收集垃圾 *shōu jí lā jī* (collect-rubbish) and 去博物館 *qù bó wù guǎn* (go-museum). Modification of nouns often involves separation of the verbs and nouns in verb phrases. Certain adverbs are allowed to be inserted between the verb and the object, as illustrated below.

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) | 他 | 去 過 | 博 物 館。 |
| | Tā | qù guò | bó wù guǎn |
| | 3sg. MASC. | go perf-marker | museum |
| | 'He has been to the museum.' | | |
| | | | |
| (2) | 他 | 去 過 | 一 次 博 物 館。 |
| | Tā | qù guò | yī cì bó wù guǎn |
| | 3sg. MASC. | go perf-marker | once museum |
| | 'He has been to the museum once.' | | |
| | | | |
| (3) | 他 | 借 了 | 我 的 書。 |
| | Tā | jiè le | wǒ de shū |
| | 3sg. MASC. | borrow perf-marker | 1sg poss-marker books' |
| | 'He has borrowed my books.' | | |
| | | | |
| (4) | 他 | 借 了 | 我 的 舊 書。 |
| | Tā | jiè le | wǒ de jiù shū |
| | 3sg. MASC. | borrow perf-marker | 1sg poss-marker old books' |
| | 'He has borrowed my old books.' | | |

In sentence (1) and (2), a perfective aspect particle 過 *guò* and an adverbial of frequency 一次/*yīcì*/ 'once' are suffixed after the verb 去/*qù*/ 'go' respectively. The modifiers in sentence (1) and (2) give information about the actions expressed by the verbs. In sentence (3) and (4), a possessive phrase 我的/*wǒ de*/ 'my' and the

² The term 'Ionization' is proposed by Chao (1968) in describing the phrasal expansion of VO compounds. He stated that phrasal VO structure allows wide variety of expansion while compounds only allow expansion in a limited numbers of ways with the constituents remain in its near context.

adjective 舊/jiù/ 'old' are allowed between the verb and the perfective particle 借了 jiè le and the object 書/shū/ 'book'. It is shown from the above examples that adverbials of frequency and verbal perfective particles can be inserted between the verbs and the objects to modify the actions, and possessive phrases and adjectives are allowed between the verbs and the objects to modify the objects.

3.2.1 Aspect Marking (AM) in Verb-Noun Compounds

Consider the selected list of VNCs below.

Insertion of aspect marker 了/le/

- a. 敗了興 bài le xìng (destroy-AM-pleasure) 'to spoil one's pleasure'
- b. *奪了目 duó le mù (take-AM-eye) 'glaring'
- c. *含了糊 hán le hú (consist-AM-vagueness) 'vague'
- d. *知了趣 zhī le qù (know-AM-interest) 'sensible and tactful'
- e. *參了天 cān le tiān (reach-AM-sky) 'extremely high'

3.2.2 Insertion of Modification of the Nominal Constituents

- a. *用他的功 yòng tā de gōng (use-possessor- effort)
- b. *失他的神 shī tā de shén (lost- possessor -mind)
- c. *參白色的天 cān bái sè de tiān (reach- white -sky)
- d. 敗老闆的興 bài lǎobǎn de xìng (destroy- possessor -pleasure)

Insertion of verbal suffix 了/le/ seems to be disallowed in most VNCs, except 敗興/bàixìng/. Surprisingly, similar exception occurs in insertion of modifiers of nominal constituents. While most of the VNCs above do not allow suffixation of perfective marker 了/le/ and modification of the nominal constituents, 敗興/bàixìng/ allows both suffixation of 了/le/ and modifier of the nominal constituent between the verb and the noun. According to Chao's (1968) definition, most of the VNCs are solid compounds, i.e. no interruption of the internal structure of the compounds is allowed, and exceptions are relative rare.

4 A Study of Two Exceptional Cases

So far, we have looked at the syntactic properties of verb-noun compounds. In what follows, I am going to give an explanation for the exceptional cases we have seen in the above observations on the syntactic behavior of verb-object compounds.

As we have examined before, most of the nominal constituents cannot undergo passivization or preposing. The nominal constituents do not show a verb-object relation within the compounds. However, there are exceptions, like 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ which do not behave consistently with other adjectival VNCs in the tests. They show a more verb-object like relation in the objecthood tests as shown in (1) - (4).

Passivization

1. 敗興/bàixìng/ (destroy-pleasure) 'spoil the pleasure' 什麼 興 都 被他敗了。 Shénme xìng dōu bèi tā bài le. 'All pleasure is destroyed by him.'	2. 傷心/shāngxīn/ (hurt-heart) 'sad' 他的 心 都 被 傷 了。 Tā de xīn dōu bèi shāng le 'His heart is broken.'
--	--

Preposing

3. 敗興/bàixìng/ (destroy-pleasure) 'spoil the pleasure' 他 連 老闆 的 興 都 敗 了。 Tā lián lǎobǎn de xìng bōu bài le 'He even spoiled his boss's pleasure.'	4. 傷心/shāngxīn/ (hurt-heart) 'sad' 他 連 媽媽 的 心 都 傷 了。 Tā lián māmā de xīn dōu shāng le 'He even hurt his mum's heart.'
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4.1 Distinctness View vs Spectrum View

There can be two possible explanations for the above phenomenon, derived from two different views concerning the nature of the distinction between verb-noun compounds and verb-objective phrases. First, it may be the case that the words 敗興/bàixìng/(destroy-pleasure) 'spoil the pleasure' and 傷心/shāngxīn/ (hurt-heart) 'sad' are not verb-noun compounds at all. They are merely verb-object phrases and thus they do not behave consistently with other compounds. This explanation is based on the view that verb-noun compounds and verb-object phrases are two distinct, mutually exclusive categories marked off with clear-cut boundaries. I will call this idea the *Distinctness View*. On the other hand, it may be the case that instead of being two distinct categories with clear-cut boundaries, verb-noun compounds and verb-object phrases form a continuum, characterized by the difference in the extent of satisfaction of the criteria of objecthood. I will call this the *Spectrum View*. Accordingly, 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ are adjectival verb-noun compounds, yet they are marginal cases as, unlike the majority of adjectival verb-noun compounds, they pass both the objecthood tests of passivisation and preposing, rendering their phrase-like appearance.

4.1.1 A Consideration on the Distinctness View

Now, let us consider the first hypothesis, namely the *Distinctness View*, i.e. 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ are not verb-noun compounds at all, but merely verb-object phrases. To determine whether 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ are compounds, we can consider Chao's (1968) definition on compounds again.

The first criterion of Chao's definition on compounds suggests that compounds should consist of at least one bound morpheme. For 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/, the nominal constituents 興/xìng/ 'pleasure' and 心/xīn/ 'heart' normally do not stand

alone. The morphemes 興/xìng/ ‘pleasure’ with the meaning of ‘pleasure’ can only combine with other morpheme, as in 雅興/yǎxìng/ ‘to have an interest in/. The same is to the morpheme 心/xīn/ ‘heart’ with the meaning of feeling. It has to be bound to other morphemes, as in 開心/kāixīn/ ‘happy’.

The criterion of inseparability of constituents focuses on the cohesion nature of the constituents in the compounds. According to this criterion, compounds should only allow a very limited extent of separation compared with phrases. 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ allow an insertion of possessors and perfective markers between the constituents. However, this seem to be the only possible way of expansion and the constituents still behave as a morphological unit to a large extent. Moreover, 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ do not allow coordination, i.e. *敗興和事/bài xìng hé shì/ ‘*destroy pleasure and event’, 傷心和感/shāngxīn hé gǎn/ ‘*hurt-heart and feeling’ and the result shows that it is more reasonable to consider the words 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ as a unitary constituent. It seems that the above observation does not support our first hypothesis. In other words, 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ are more likely to be compounds instead of merely VO phrases.

4.1.2 A Consideration on the Spectrum View

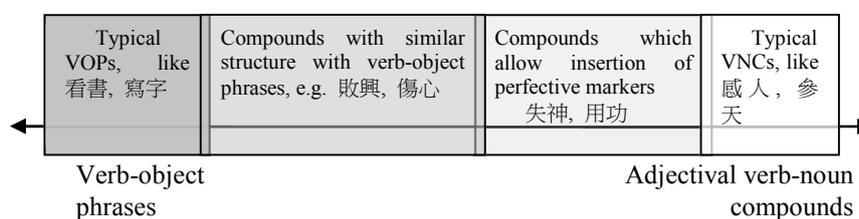
Now, let us consider the possibility of our second hypothesis, the *Spectrum View*, i.e. 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ are marginal cases of adjectival verb-noun compounds which are closer to the end of verb-object phrases on the spectrum of verb-noun compounds and verb-object phrases. We can compare the similarity or difference of the morphological structure of a VO phrase and compounds with nominal constituents bearing different semantic role in relation to the verbs.

Verb in VO phrase	敗興/bàixìng/ 傷心/shāngxīn/	感人/gǎnrén/ 惱人/nǎorén/	知心/zhīxīn/	參天/cāntiān/
打小明 /dǎ Xiǎomíng/				
Argument structure	Semantic roles of the nouns in relation to the verbs			
<Agent, Patient>	Patient	Experiencer	theme	Locative

From the above table, we can see that the nominal constituents of the compound 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ get the same semantic role as the object 小明/Xiǎomíng/. Since there should be a close relation between the semantic relation and internal cohesion between V and N in a compound and the syntactic properties of the compound as a whole, we can expect that if two entities have similar morphological structure and internal cohesion, they should express similar syntactic behavior. Let us summarize the morphosyntactic properties of VO phrases, VNCs and the compound adjectives 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/.

	VO phrases	VNCs	敗興/bàixìng/ 傷心/shāngxīn/
Insertion of adjectives between V and N	✓	✗	✓
Insertion of perfective markers between V and N	✓	✗	✓
Expressions of degree with adverbs, like 很/hěn/ 'very' and 得很/déhěn/ 'very'	✗	✓	✓

It can be seen from the above table that 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ behave like typical VNCs and VO compounds at the same time. The observation supports our second hypothesis, namely, the Spectrum View. There is a continuum between typical verb-object phrases and adjectival verb-noun compounds. The Spectrum View tries to explain and capture the relation between the internal cohesion of constituents in VN compounds and the variation of syntactic properties of different types of VN compounds. The figure below demonstrates the idea of the Spectrum View. Adjectival verb-noun compounds like 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/ with the internal cohesion structure more similar to verb-object phrases, i.e. verb < agent, patient >, would be placed nearer to the end VOPs. They have some overlapping in the syntactic properties of compounds and VO phrases. On the other hand, typical adjectival verb-noun compounds, like 感人/gǎnrén/ and 參天/cāntiān/, with their internal cohesion structure more different from VOPs, are put nearer to the end of VNCs. In other words, they are more pure VN compounds.



Similarity of internal cohesion to the end of typical VO phrases or typical VNCs is a matter of degree. It is hard to define a clear-cut boundary between different types of compounds. As we can see in the above diagram of the VO phrase and adjectival verb-noun compounds spectrum, there is some overlapping area for the compounds 敗興/bàixìng/, 傷心/shāngxīn/ and 失神/shīshén/, /用功/yòng gōng/. The overlapping can be explained by considering the table below. The compounds 失神/shīshén/ and /用功/yòng gōng/ behaves more like typical VNCs than 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/. At the same time, they do show some common syntactic properties with 敗興/bàixìng/ and 傷心/shāngxīn/. Thus, there is overlapping area indicating the some shared syntactic properties among them.

	VO phrases	敗興 /bàixīng/ 傷心/shāngxīn/	失神 /shīshén /用功 /yòng gōng/	VNCs
Insertion of adjectives between V and N	✓	✓	✗	✗
Insertion of perfective markers between V and N	✓	✓	✓	✗
Expressions of degree with adverbs, like 很/hěn/ 'very' and 得很/déhěn/ 'very'	✗	✓	✓	✓

5 Conclusion

The focus of many studies on Chinese compounds, especially verb-object compounds as termed in the literature, has been put on distinguishing verb-object compounds and verb-object phrases, mainly by revealing the difference in their morphosyntactic behaviour. Moreover, many studies focus on verbal VOCs, but not adjectival VOCs.

In this paper, I have put the focus on *Adjectival Verb-Noun Compounds* in Chinese. Adjectives in Chinese should be classified as an independent syntactic category as they show some distinct and unique syntactic characteristics as a class. However, verbs in Chinese, like 喜歡 xǐ huān, do show some overlap in their syntactic behavior with verbs in Chinese. For example, they can appear at the position of verbs in sentences and allow to be followed by objects like verbs, but they can be modified by the adverbials of degree 很 hěn. Classifying these kinds of words into either adjectives or verbs would not be satisfactory. To explain this, I have suggested there exists some continuum between the category called 'verb' and the category called 'adjectives'.

Accordingly, what I want to show in this paper is twofold. On the one hand, I suggest that the term "verb-noun compound", instead of "verb-object compound" is more appropriate. On the other hand, I recommend that, instead of a clear-cut boundary between the two, it is more plausible to posit that there is a continuum between VO phrases and VNCs. I hope this study manages to shed new light on the explanation of the distinct syntactic features of Chinese VNCs.

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“Transform the Old, Establish the New” – Review of Research on the Teaching and Learning of Chinese Writing (1978-2013)

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Abstract. “Learning from the past, looking ahead into the future” is the primary aim of the current study. This article is divided into two parts: Part I serves as a review on the focus and development of language education research in Hong Kong over the past thirty years; Part II pinpoints the important issues which require in-depth study, indicating future research directions and perspectives. Capitalizing on the experience and wisdom of past researchers in this area, the current study engages the method of content analysis to trace the research development and findings in Chinese language education, focusing on the teaching and learning of Chinese writing skills, and on the enhancement of students’ writing ability through teachers’ composition correction and feedback. It is hoped that the article will shed some light on future research objectives and orientations in Chinese language education.

Keywords: Chinese writing research; language education, language Pedagogy

1 Research Aim

“Learning from the past, looking ahead into the future” is the primary aim of the current study. This article is divided into two parts: Part I serves as a review on the focus and development of language education research in Hong Kong over the past thirty years; and Part II pinpoints the important issues which require in-depth study, indicating future research directions and perspectives. Based on the experience and wisdom of past researchers in this area and the application of content analysis method tracing the research development in language education in the local context, this article endeavors to explore and suggest future research objectives and orientations.

2 Literature Review for the Present Study

The current study targets at four research categories, namely “articles in academic journals” (41), “academic conference papers”(22), “Master’s and Doctor’s degree

theses”(25) and “other” articles (16) including chapters in course books, research reports, etc.

3 Analysis and Discussion

This study branches out into three directions of categorization, namely “research subjects” and “research methods” and “research topics”, attempting to showcase the development sequences and characteristics of the teaching of Chinese writing in Hong Kong.

3.1 Research Subjects

Most research studies in Chinese writing are targeted at primary and secondary school students, and studies related to post-secondary and university students are in the minority (陳榮石 1993, 1999, 2001 ; 何萬貫、歐佩娟 1988 ; 伍寶珠、楊書誠 2008). Participants in these studies generally possess an average standard of Chinese and most are mediocre Chinese writers, with few from elite, top-level schools (李孝聰 1996 ; 關之英 1997). Studies focusing on the writing skills of students with below average ability are rare (何萬貫 1996 ; 伍寶珠、楊書誠 2008), and those involving students on both extreme ends of being gifted or dyslexic are almost non-existent (劉鳳鸞 2008 ; 何萬貫 2010).

3.2 Research Methodology

The teaching and learning of Chinese writing was dominated by traditional qualitative research in the 60's and 70's. Contemporary qualitative and quantitative research which surfaced in the 90's had their distinct advantages. Until the 21st century, traditional qualitative research methods continued to be used by researchers in this. Since the 80's, the qualitative methods used by local researchers in their order of preference have been: onsite object analysis, onsite observation and interview, with research materials sourcing from students' compositions, “think-aloud protocol”, observation video tapes and interview records.

On the other hand, quantitative research methods employed by local researchers are mainly “Pretest and posttest comparative experiments” comparing the changes before and after the tests (謝錫金、岑紹基 1989 ; 何萬貫 1996 ; 李孝聰 1966 ; 司徒秀薇 1966 ; 關之英 1997 ; 謝家浩 1998 ; 潘建忠 1998 ; 岑紹基 2000 ; 何萬貫 2000a, 2000b, 2006, 2010) second to that are studies on correction and feedback tests (蕭炳基、何萬貫 1981 ; 何萬貫 2000a ; 2006) but tests on writing ability and related themes (馮祿德 1980 ; 羅燕琴 1998) are less popular.

3.3 Research Topics

From the 70's and 80's to the present time, popular topics among local researchers in writing include "The Teaching of Writing", followed by "Research on Language Errors in Writing", "Correction and Feedback in marking Composition" and "Composition Assessment".

The Teaching of Writing. In terms of quantity, most of the existing literature comes under the category of "process-based writing" enlightened by Western theories in this area, for example, in Flower and Hayes' "Cognitive Process Model", in Scardamalia and Bereiter's "The Writing Process Model of experienced and novice writers" and in Nystrab and Himley's "Social Interaction Model". In fact, a considerable number of academic articles published in the 90's used "writing process" as their research theme. Some researchers approached the topic from a macroscopic perspective analyzing individual differences in the writing process (謝錫金 1991; 謝錫金、林守純 1992; 薛鳳鳴 1998; 司徒美儀 2000; 岑偉宗 2000; 鄧詠詩 2002), while others adopted a microscopic view exploring differences in the process of "planning" and in the strategies of organizing ideas (何萬貫 1996). In the realm of research differentiating the writing process between experienced and novice writers, most of the sampling data in the early days came from local secondary schools which compared performance of students varied in writing ability on such aspects as organization, structure and plot (何萬貫 1995, 1999). The process of correction was later given much attention (何萬貫 2000b). Research themes in recent years have expanded to incorporate studies comparing dyslexic students with their healthy counterparts (Leong & Ho 2008; 何萬貫 2010).

Composition Correction and Feedback. Articles on Composition Correction and Feedback written by local researchers dated back to the late 70's and the most widely-publicized evaluation system then was the use of "symbolic codes" (何萬貫 1979). In the 90's, scholars respectively suggested "Read-aloud protocol", "Checklist Evaluation", "Peer Evaluation" and "Self-Evaluation" (何萬貫 1997a, 1997b; 岑紹基 1992, 1999, 2000; 周麗英 1998), contemplating to find new ways of marking to effectively elevate student performance in writing, and to alleviate teachers' marking workload. Besides methods of marking and evaluation, the quality of marking (何萬貫 2006, 2007b), and teachers' cognitive performance during and after composition marking (張秋芳 2006) have raised much concern among researchers in language education and as a result, they provide pointers and "telltale signals" in teacher training.

Composition Evaluation. In the past, research on marking composition revolved around the assessment or grading system. Some research studies drew comparisons between the reliability of different assessment methods (overall assessment, component assessment, component grading assessment) (司徒秀薇 1996); some measured students' writing ability from the complexity of the sentences they wrote (陳榮石 2001); and some examined the disparity in various assessment systems and found ways to improve them (王晉光 1991; 陳榮石 1993; 陳志良、鄭紹基 2003) although

assessment disparity was rarely made the main research topic or question (陳繼新 1973), it more often appeared as one of many research issues/questions for consideration (王晉光 1991 ; 張洪壽 2002).

This study employs “one article one entry” as its method of classification. In cases of more than one article, the researchers will make classification based on the nature of the arguments. Example as follows: “The ability of Chinese secondary school teachers in distinguishing, describing and correcting linguistic errors” (Education Journal, Issue 34, Vol 1, pp 117-130). From the title, the article could either be classified as “Research on Correction of Writing” (or “The teaching of Writing”) or “Quality of Writing Teachers” (i.e. “Other Titles”). After reviewing the content of the article, the researchers decided to include it in the sub-category - “Quality of Remarks” under the broad category of “Research on Remarks and Criticisms”.

4 Research Prospect of the teaching of Writing in Hong Kong

From the above literature review, it is evidenced that the scope and scale of research into Chinese writing has been adequately established. Further research effort should be placed on the following topics and issues:

4.1 “Holistic” Research on the Writing Process

As mentioned previously, existing local literature on the teaching of writing is largely based on Western theories and development, among which the theories on “writing processes” have far reaching influences. The “Cognitive Process Model” expounded by Flower and Hayes (1981) has often been used as a research framework by scholars in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. In fact, many local academic theses published in the 90’s focused on writing processes. In the Cognitive Process Model, writing processes involve “specifically planning”, “translating” and “reviewing”. However, local literature on writing processes tends to largely focus on the “planning” stage with its training strategies, much less on “translating” and “reviewing”. To put it simply, it focuses on “prewriting guidance”, teaching students content organization and structuring (what Flower and Hayes said about the process of “generating ideas” and “organizing ideas”), and also exploring the effects of “writing strategy training” in the “planning” stage. It can be summarized as follows:

Using Teachers’ directions on Memory Association and Writing Guidelines to assist senior secondary students to generate ideas in Writing (王培光 1983).

Teaching students to use association and image building methods to turn observations, personal memories and experiences into ideas for writing (謝錫金、岑紹基1989 ; 謝錫金、林守純1992 ; 謝錫金、黃潔貞 1995).

Teaching students to use sporadic thinking (e.g. Brainstorming, brain map) to reorganize writing materials (謝錫金、林守純1992 ; 李孝聰 1996 ; 謝家浩 1988 ; 何嘉華 2000).

“Inputting” experiences from different sensory organs to help students generate writing ideas by means of retrieving information from their long-term memory.

Forming small discussion groups to help students organize writing materials and guidelines (韓炎聯1991；張洪壽 2000).

Research into the writing process of “translating” in Hong Kong dated back to the 90’s but it remains scanty to-date. Earlier research was confined to the “suspension” stage, exploring types and functions of transferring strategies in both spoken and written languages (謝錫金、羅綺蘭 1991；謝錫金、張瑞文 1993；周麗英 1992；謝錫金 1996), describing analyses using qualitative research (e.g. observations and think-aloud protocol), and attempting to probe into the effects on writing when translating from dialects into standard written languages (周麗英 1992；羅綺文 2004). In essence, there is great potential in developing research related to this stage of writing.

“Correction in writing” has always been regarded an important step in the process of writing. Not until the late 80’s had there been research articles on correction. Only a handful of writers are involved in this aspect of writing research (何萬貫 1979, 2000a, 2000b, 2006; 蕭炳基、何萬貫 1981；謝錫金 1993；岑紹基 1992；周麗英 1998), among them are those explicitly involved in the process of marking (何萬貫 2000b), types of marking (謝錫金 1993) and marking ability (蕭炳基、何萬貫 1981；周麗英 1998；何萬貫 2006). In other research literature, “marking” often takes the form of “testing” which is essentially a post-testing research tool of which most researchers have not provided in-depth discussions in their articles (王培光 1983；韓炎聯 1991). In a nutshell, contemporary research literature on composition marking has arrived at the following conclusions:

Secondary school students possess some ability to correct mispronounced words, wrong words and wrong sentences. Ability to correct is proportionate to students’ language ability (蕭炳基、何萬貫1981).

Primary school students’ ability to correct is limited to word use but does not go beyond the structural level and this underscores the importance of, and the need for teaching those students appropriate correction strategies (謝錫金1993).

Students varied in language ability also exhibit varied correction ability pinpointing that correction ability is a reliable indicator of writing ability (何萬貫2000b).

A review of the literature indicates that how to nurture students to correct errors made by themselves in writing compositions is indeed a vital research topic.

In the past, local studies related to writing processes were either qualitative or quantitative in nature, and some were even pilot studies. On any one single topic, it was rare to conduct teaching experiments twice or more using the same research design. Triangulation or cross-verification of test data was not a common practice either (何萬貫 1995, 1996, 1999；何萬貫、區佩娟 1998；謝錫金 1983；1989；1991；謝錫金、林守純 1992). Details about the age and gender characteristics of student participants in the specific planning, translating and reviewing stages were also missing. In fact, a massive longtime research project of such magnitude requires the pulling of resources from different directions but it will be worthwhile towards the end as it contributes to the design of appropriate curriculum and writing resources for the teaching and learning of Chinese writing.

4.2 Expanding Research on Composition Marking

In the past thirty years, research pertaining to feedback and correction in Chinese composition has put emphasis on “quality” instead of “quantity”, and only two scholars delve into this kind of research (何萬貫 1979, 1997a, 1997b, 2000, 2009; 岑紹基 1992, 2000) (Extant empirical research in this area leans towards methods of composition evaluation (e.g. detailed evaluation, the use of symbolic codes, Read-aloud protocol, Checklist Evaluation), there are few studies discussing teachers’ marking quality, as well as quality of teachers’ comments (何萬貫 2006, 2007)). In short, past research focused on Correction at the expense of providing Feedback.

Research on Types of Comments. Since the 80’s to the present time, research on composition feedback and comments has prevailed in the West, chalking a history of over thirty years. Topics range from the study of how comments impact on students’ writing performance, correction tendencies, directions and strategies, through to both qualitative and quantitative studies unfolding students’ reaction, understanding and recognition of favorable and unfavorable comments, thus establishing a solid theoretical basis for research on types of comments. Research results are summarized as follows:

Comments should aim for deeper meanings, not on their superficial levels (Zamel 1985; Sommers 1982; Gilbert 1990; Truscott 1996).

Overall or summary comments are better than marginal or partial comments in inducing students to make corrections as they are more directional and instructional (Nelson & Schunn 2009).

Students encounter difficulties in understanding content-related comments (Beacon 1993; Ashwell 2000).

Students are more in favor of command-type comments (Zamel 1985; Ransdell 1999).

Over-assertive comments on students’ writing performance create negative affects (Knoblauch & Brannon 1982; Ferris 1997).

Students appreciate fair and well-intended comments (McGee 1999).

Mitigated feedback, such as questions, was not found to be effective to boost students’ motivation and performance in correction (Ferris 1999; Sugita 2006; Nelson & Schunn 2009).

Mitigated comments in the form of questions did not contribute much to research on writing in the West (Ferris 1997; Sugita 2006; Nelson & Schunn 2009).

It is undeniably true that research studies mentioned in the paragraphs above provide valuable references to Chinese writing researchers. The only drawback is the feedback and comments are derived from English writing. Are the types of comments much recommended by past researchers in western writing applicable to Chinese writing? Are categories of comments proposed by Western scholars applicable to the teaching of Chinese writing locally? Will local students learning Chinese have the same attitude in the way they handle comments as their Western counterparts learning English or even with Overseas Chinese? Will Hong Kong students’ preferences towards comments affect their interest, academic performance, correction habits and behavior in their learning of Chinese writing? Further empirical research in these relevant aspects is mandatory to get us closer to the truth.

Quality of Feedback and Correction. Aside from the classification of comments, the quality of teachers' comments has often been ignored in local literature until recently (何萬貫 2006, 2007b). Empirical research in recent years proves that teachers' comments are deemed effective in encouraging student to do corrections (何萬貫 2000b). In fact, if they are used wisely, they can be a means to the end of improving students' standard of writing. However, studies have indicated that teachers' writing standards (張綺文 2008b), their own ability to correct linguistic errors (何萬貫 2006) and their attitude towards marking quality (何萬貫 2006) have repeatedly been disappointing. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to upgrade quality of teachers' correction and feedback. Questions such as: What is the relation between teachers' quality of feedback and correction, and students' performance in writing (何萬貫 2009)? A unilateral relation? A bilateral relation? A positive relation? A negative relation? Is there any mediating effect between the two? If so, what is the mediating effect? Although research questions or issues of such kind have not attracted much attention in the past, will they now constitute the research trends of our future development?

4.3 Research Differentiating Individual Writing Ability

Over the years, researching into writing has been restricted by subject population and size. Experiments and tests are conducted with reference to preset topics and target groups of students from particular year levels, most of whom possess average to high language standards. Both gifted students and students with learning disabilities (何萬貫 2010 ; 劉鳳鸞 2008), and students with standards that lie below the average norm seem to have been excluded from these studies (何萬貫 1996 ; 伍寶珠、楊書誠 2008). As well, there is meager research differentiating students' writing ability. The same situation also applies to comparative studies between veteran and novice writers (i.e. highly proficient students vs mediocre to poor students). With the increasing popularity of an integrated approach towards education, it is inevitable for language teachers to be assigned duties of teaching classes of mixed abilities. Can they still rely on obsolete writing curricula, methods, materials, etc., to achieve the desired results and effects? In the years to come, "disparity in learning abilities" may be another topic worthy of investigation.

4.4 Extensive Prevalence Survey of the Teaching of Writing

In the past, local researchers have devoted themselves to exploring the teaching of writing, in particular the assessment of writing. For example, the Read More to Write More Project, Whole Language Approach in Writing, Flexibility in Composition Titles, Creative Writing, Assessment using Symbolic Codes, Read-aloud protocol, Checklist Evaluation, etc. How effective are these studies and approaches? Have their benefits been recognized by frontline teachers and applied to the teaching of writing in schools? Or are these researchers and their achievement only "shine" within the confines of the

testing environment? Have students enjoyed the benefits of their studies or the benefits only stop at test participants? All these questions have yet to be addressed in the research literature of writing and assessment. A survey study conducted earlier revealed that some local secondary schools have stringent school policies with regard to composition times, word limits and marking systems. More surprisingly, the detailed marking or evaluation system shunned by many researchers has turned out to be the most popular method used by many school teachers (何萬貫 2008). It is important for future research studies to collect data reflecting current situations in the teaching of writing in different schools, to combine both qualitative and quantitative research methods through class observations and interviews, and to gather information from different sources to be used as important reference materials.

5 Research Limitation

The two writers of this article have taken reference from 94 local articles on writing research. These articles are sourced from local mainstream academic journals, Master's and Doctor's degree theses, and conference and seminar proceedings. They have no intention of ruling out that there are other articles (e.g., course books on writing, journal articles) that have not been included in the current scope of research. Limited as it is, this article should shed some light on the topic as it contains updated research data and literature.

The writing genres discussed in this article mainly consist of argumentative, narrative, expository and descriptive types. Practical writing works by post-secondary and university students are not included as objects of research in this study. The results of this study will definitely provide useful pointers to professionals engaged in curriculum design for primary and secondary schools, to practicing teachers and teacher trainers.

Restricted by the two researchers' knowledge, personal views and opinions, classification methods used in this study may not be flawless. However, the research report has been verified by two practicing teachers to increase its validity and reliability. Both teachers are degree holders majored in Chinese, and they have also earned their postgraduate education diplomas and eight years of experience teaching Chinese in secondary schools. In matters of contention between the two teachers, the professional opinions of a third teacher have also been sought.

6 Conclusion

Since the inception of the first empirical study in the teaching of writing in 1979, this area of research has chalked up a history of over 30 years. Local language scholars and researchers have undertaken numerous studies to look at the issues involved from different perspectives, establishing a firm theoretical basis for others to follow. Our predecessors used to say: "It is harder to keep than to form a business or in his case a research record". Will the solid foundation built by past researchers render it possible for present and future scholars to advance the research work and take it to the next

Level? To a large extent, this depends on their ability to break from the tradition of overly relying on research works from the West so that they can introduce a new chapter of “originality and localization” to form a theoretical basis of their own.

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Using Visual Chunking Strategies in Decoding Chinese Characters

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Abstract. This study investigates how two primary school children in Hong Kong who have English as their major language use visual chunking strategies (VCS) when decoding Chinese characters. The two children were invited to participate in a series of VCS instruction sessions in which 60 radicals were taught over a month. Six Character Recognition Test tests were administered in order to track whether there were changes in the way they used VCS. The effect seemed most significant in the delayed post-test, and participants had demonstrated a wider use of VCS after the instruction sessions. Though the participants' performances cannot be generalised to the population, this study has provided insights into how some children make use of visual chunking as their strategies to decode Chinese characters, and how this may be related to their age and language background. Six types of errors made by the participants were categorised and coded, and they may be served as a basis of errors analysis regarding Chinese character learning.

Keywords: Visual chunking strategies, learning Chinese as a second language, Chinese language learning

1 Introduction

Primary school children in Hong Kong typically find reading and writing Chinese characters challenging and thus many of them make various types of errors (Ng, 2004). As a result, innovative ways that help learners of Chinese improve their Chinese character learning are always welcomed. Because of the growing trend of Chinese learning, it may be even more interesting to study Chinese characters learning by children who have another language, like English, as their first or major language.

English speakers remember lengthy English words by breaking them into parts, probably on a phonetic basis. By the same token, separating Chinese characters in order to remember them more efficiently seems possible. However, Chinese is a logographic language, thus linear division of a character is ineffective, or even inappropriate. All Chinese characters can be written in a square-shaped box. Thus visual location adjectives such as *top*, *bottom*, *left*, *right* and *middle* can be ways of describing different parts of a Chinese character in a box. Language learners' intention to separate a character into different parts, or chunks, is what means by visual chunking strategies (VCS).

The present study aimed to investigate how two Hong Kong children, who had English as their major language, used VCS spontaneously when decoding Chinese characters over a series of VCS instruction sessions.

2 Relevant Studies

Apart from phonological and morphological awareness, which are found to be important for processing alphabetical languages (Bus and Van IJzendoorn, 1999; McBride-Cheng, Cho, Liu, Wagner, Shu, Zhou, Cheuk and Muse, 2005), visual skill seems to be an additional feature for processing the orthographic structure of Chinese characters. Tong and McBride-Chang (2010) studied 2nd- and 5th-grade bilingual children in Hong Kong and found that visual-orthographic skills and morphological awareness were both significantly related to traditional Chinese character recognition.

Chunking is the grouping or organising of the input sequence into units or chunks (Miller, 1956:90). Miller (1956) suggests that typical human beings can only hold about seven units in their working memory due to its limited capacity, but grouping bits of information into chunks can increase the total amount of information remembered.

Su (2001:67) suggests that the average number of strokes of Chinese characters is 10.75 strokes and that 10- and 11-stroke characters are of the most frequent occurrence. The Ancestry of Chinese Language (Wang, 1995) proclaimed 龠 (64 strokes) as the character with the most number of strokes. Since the average number of strokes (10.75) exceeds human working memory capacity (7 +/- 2) (Miller, 1956), typical human beings naturally find it difficult to remember an average character stroke by stroke. Chinese radicals are standard ways of grouping individual strokes and are for the convenience of dictionary search. According to the concept of chunking theory, which groups or organises the input sequence into units or chunks (Miller, 1956:90), every radical can be viewed as an individual chunk. However, when it comes to character learning, students still copy most characters stroke by stroke without analysing separate chunks embedded in them (Packard et al., 2006; Wu, Li and Anderson, 1999). The current study argues that, in Chinese character learning, remembering chunks of a character requires less working memory capacity than remembering the whole character stroke by stroke, unless the character is so familiar that a character itself becomes a chunk. In other words, it is hypothesised that chunking strategies ease Chinese learners' working memory load and help learners manage characters with more complicated orthographic structures.

Packard et al (2006) conducted a quantitative study investigating whether teaching first graders' morphological and orthographic knowledge would benefit their reading ability in L1 Chinese. They taught students semantic and phonetic knowledge of radicals and their tests were at word- (usually of two characters) and sentence-level on simplified Chinese characters. Pak et al (2005) tested 179 Hong Kong primary school children from first, second and fourth grades and investigated the development of VCS in processing Chinese characters. They found that even first graders were able to apply visual chunking skills when reading and writing Chinese characters. They also argue that older and high-ability children made better use of visual chunking skills than

younger and low-ability children. However, only a general picture is provided in this study without showing how exactly these children are using VCS

Since visual skills are important to Chinese character learning and chunking strategies are found to be effective ways to organise information, VCS are believed to be beneficial to children's processing of Chinese characters. To add to Pak et al. (2005)'s quantitative study on children's use of VCS, there is a need for a qualitative study which looks into the role of VCS on decoding and writing Chinese characters.

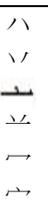
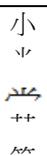
The present study focuses on character-level on traditional Chinese characters. It attempts to look into detail the use of VCS before, during and after VCS instruction sessions by two Hong Kong primary schoolchildren with English as their major language and to investigate whether explicit VCS instruction changes their way of decoding Chinese characters.

3 Methodology

The two children, ten-year-old Calvin and eight-year-old Yannie (pseudonyms), were brother and sister living together with their parents and two Pilipino maids in Hong Kong. The maids spoke only English with all family members. Both children learned English and Mandarin in a local primary school in which English was the medium of instruction. They wrote memos in English, read product manuals in English while both Chinese and English were available, watched only English TV programmes and choose to read only English story books, thus apart from speaking Cantonese with their relatives, English was considered as their major language. They were invited to participate in this study because the researcher knew that they found reading and writing Chinese characters challenging.

Sixty radicals were chosen and the participants were taught four to six radicals in each instruction session, depending on the radical groups and the number of strokes in each radical.

Table 4. Target radicals presented in the VCS instruction sessions.

Week/Day	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1			
Week 2			

	讠		
Week 3	工 土 士 王 立	刀 力 大 火 方	寸 才 木 米 禾 采
Week 4	田 日 白 月	自 𠂇 皿 血	目 貝 頁 耳

In each 1-hour VCS instruction session, the participants were introduced to the four to six target radicals which they had to learn in that session. The researcher demonstrated on a whiteboard how each radical should be written and told them the pronunciation and meaning, if there was any, of the target radicals. To ensure that they perceived the target radicals correctly, they were asked to write each radical once on the whiteboard. They then received a passage in Chinese, which was a story ranging from 84 to 100 characters, and had to find all the characters which contained the target radicals. The participants should have been able to find seven characters for each radical, but occasionally there were eight. This was because sometimes an extra word with the target radicals was needed in order for the passage to make sense. They were told to look at the characters one by one and find any characters in which a target radical was embedded. This was to train their VCS in the receptive level because during the process, they were required to separate the characters into different components and decide whether the words contained the target radicals. The participants were allowed to read the passage as many times as they needed until they found all the answers. After reading the passages, each participant received a set of magnets. Each target radical was stuck on a magnet, and the participants were asked to use these magnets to form the characters they found in the passage. If there were parts not covered by the target radicals, they had to write the missing parts in the correct position. In addition to the target radicals learned in that session, participants were encouraged to use all magnets they had from previous sessions. After making magnetic words on the whiteboard, the participants proceeded to another task, in which they had to read four characters printed on the worksheet and circle two which did not contain the target radicals. The characters were chosen by the researcher based on common errors made by Hong Kong primary school children. The participants raised hand at their own table after finishing the whole part. They were then asked to give reasons for the answers chosen.

Six Character Recognition Tests were administered before, during and after the intervention. A pre-test (T1) was scheduled just before the day that the intervention

started as a baseline of the participants' performance. In the midst of the four-week intervention, T2 was scheduled on the day after the first week of intervention; T3 was scheduled on the day after the second week of intervention; T4 and T5 were scheduled after the third and fourth week of intervention respectively. These tests aimed to track changes in the participants' use of VCS after one week, two weeks, three weeks and four weeks of VCS instruction. A delayed post-test (T6) was scheduled a month after T5 in order to see whether there was a delayed effect.

The Character Recognition Test was designed to probe participants' recognition of chunks when decoding Chinese characters. There were 2 trial items, which were designed to ensure the participants' understanding on how the test worked, and 12 test items in each test. For every item, the participants were given a character (with at least one target radical) to look at and had to choose the character among three choices in which one of them was the target item (a real character) and two were near-homograph visual distracters (one real character and one pseudo-character). The two real characters were selected from Fu (2007), in which confusing radical pairs based on Chinese learners' common errors are illustrated. The pseudo-characters were not real characters in Chinese but were made up of legitimate radicals; thus they looked like real characters but were not. Since pseudo-characters could not be typed, the researcher created the characters by cutting and pasting radicals from real characters using Microsoft© PowerPoint and Window© Paint in order to make them look like typed characters. As a result, all three choices in each test item looked similar. This was to test the participants' ability to recognise the target radicals.

When the test started, the first target item appeared on a computer screen for three seconds. After three seconds, the character disappeared from the screen and then a purple star, a blue star and a red star were shown on the screen at one-second intervals. The stars were used in order to retain participants' attention; they were followed by the next slide on which three choices were presented, each indicated by a letter of the Roman alphabet (A, B, C). The choices stayed on the screen for another three seconds and participants had to choose the correct answer. They had a further three-second interval, during which time the screen was blank, to write the corresponding alphabet letter on an answer sheet. The screen then proceeded to the second item. The test went on automatically until all 12 items had been presented. For instance, they saw 糗 in T1 (item 5), and they had to select it among 糗, 糗 and 糗.

There were altogether 72 target items (12 items X 6 tests). Half of these had difference in at least a target radical (Group 1) and half of them did not (Group 2). Some characters in Group 2 were single-unit characters. In addition, the number of strokes in all target items was controlled for structural complexity. These characters ranged from three to sixteen strokes (mean: 9.9; S.D.: 3.6). Group1- and Group2-characters as well as more-stroke and less-stroke characters were evenly allocated into the six tests. The order of the test items within each test was randomly assigned. Table 2 below shows all target items used in the test, in ascending order based on the number of strokes. Table 3 shows all items based on the order they appeared on the screen.

Table 2. Items in stroke ascending order.

Group 1														
No. of strokes	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Items		天	卡	江	盲	拉	眨	荀	副	敝	睛	楷	橙	憾
		什	幼	余	杠	杏	持	茶	答	傳	煌	慚	幢	腫
			叨		妓	侍	架	浸	畫	菅	粳	粹		
								陡						
Group 2														
No. of strokes	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Items	已	丐	匆	戎	攻	玫	奏	衰	窑	喙	暖	屣	頷	餞
	勺		厄	臣	灸	快	眈	盎	春	鈎	貉	鳳	獎	
			弁		折	兗	冠	宮	鹵	廊	微	遺	撒	

Table 3. Items in appearance order.

Test/Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
T1	江	快	杏	天	荀	鳳	已	粹	傳	鈎	戎	盎
T2	勺	兗	楷	菅	臣	宮	盲	浸	屣	眨	什	廊
T3	持	奏	攻	卡	粳	丐	頷	暖	答	橙	杠	窑
T4	獎	匆	妓	幢	貉	煌	幼	架	眈	灸	畫	春
T5	侍	折	撒	憾	副	茶	叨	冠	微	厄	鹵	睛
T6	喙	餞	拉	腫	弁	因	玫	遺	敝	衰	陡	慚

After each test, the participants were invited to do a stimulated recall in which they told the researcher about their thoughts during the test. All stimulated recalls started with the researcher asking them whether there were items that they were not sure about. This was to lead them to start thinking about the problems they had during the test and how they solved them. The participants also gave information about how they decoded each character in detail and what strategies they had adopted. Participants were encouraged to draw lines on the test item sheets to show clearly how they divided some characters into chunks and to show exactly the parts they paid attention to or had problems with.

4 Findings

The participants reported making use of VCS when they remembered how a prompted character looked in the test. Since VCS categorisations have not been developed in the literature, the researcher has attempted to code participants' reported use of VCS based

on the information obtained from their responses in the stimulated recalls. The six categories are:

1. 2-part chunking: dividing a character into two parts.
2. 3-part chunking: dividing a character into three parts.
3. Remembering a similar radical/character: remembering another radical or character that is familiar to themselves and trying to retrieve that radical/character and then add/delete one or more stroke(s) in order to choose the prompted character.
4. Associating radicals/the character with meaning: remembering the meaning of the radicals and combining parts together to form a word.
5. Associating radicals with English letters: remembering radicals using English letters that look similar.
6. Associating radicals with shapes: remembering radicals using shapes that look similar.

Yannie only reported using two types of VCS (two-part and three-part chunking strategies) when she was asked to recognise prompted characters in the Character Recognition Test. The ways of separating the characters are (short form in brackets):

- 2-part chunking: left and right (L-R)
 top and bottom (T-B)
- 3-part chunking: left, middle and right (L-M-R)
 left, top-right and bottom-right (L-TR-BR)

Table 4. Yannie's reported use of VCS.

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
2-part chunking	粹(L-R)	揩(L-R)	-	煌(L-R) 舂(T-B)	憾(L-R)	拉(L-R) 餞(L-R) 弁(T-B) 余(T-B) 敝(L-R) 陡(L-R)
3-part chunking	-	-	-	貉 (L-TR- BR)	微 (L-M- R)	腫 (L-TR- BR) 漸 (L-M- R)
Total no. of items	1	1	0	3	2	8

Table 4 shows the types of VCS Yannie used in each test, the chunked characters and the way of separating the chunked characters. Recall that T1 was conducted before the VCS instruction sessions, T2 to T4 were conducted between sessions and T5 and T6 were conducted after the sessions.

Yannie made use of VCS in all tests except T3. She reported using these strategies in one out of 12 items before the instruction sessions started (in T1). During the instruction period (T2 to T4), her use of VCS increased slightly, as she reported applying VCS to three test items in T4. A month after the instruction period (as shown in T6), her use of VCS had significantly increased to eight items. This may suggest that the effectiveness of VCS instruction needs some time to develop.

Yannie only reported using 2-part chunking strategy in earlier tests (T1 and T2), while 2-part and 3-part strategies were reported using in later tests (T4 to T6). Actually, characters such as 楷 in T2 can also be divided into three parts (i.e. L-TR-BR), but Yannie only divided it into two parts (L-R). She still had problems with this item in T2 even though she divided it into two parts, and she eventually selected an incorrect answer for this item. If she had been comfortable in using a 3-part chunking strategy for this item, she might have remembered this item better and been able to choose the correct answer. The use of 3-part chunking strategy in later tests suggests that Yannie was able to manage more types of VCS after the instruction sessions and to handle both 2-part and 3-part chunking strategies.

Yannie reported using 2-part chunking strategy on 11 items and 3-part chunking strategy on 4 items. Eight characters in which she used 2-part chunking strategy were divided into left and right parts, while the other three were divided into top and bottom parts. Two items in which she used 3-part chunking strategy were divided into left, middle and right parts, while the other two were divided into left and right parts first, and the right part was further divided into top and bottom parts. When she was asked during the stimulated recall why she divided some words into two parts and some others into three parts, Yannie reported,

Y: Because some of the words are difficult but not too, so I divide into 2 parts. But some of them is much more difficult, so I divide them into 3 parts.

R: Okay, so when you find a word more difficult, you divide it into more parts?

Y: (nodding)

(T6-Yannie)

In addition, when Yannie was asked whether to divide a character into parts or to remember it as a whole, she explained,

Y: Because some of the words are easy to remember, and some of the words are not easy.

R: For the easy ones, how did you remember them?

Y: As a whole.

R: As a whole. And for the difficult ones?

Y: Half.

R: Half? You mean divide them into parts?

Y: (nodding)

(T6 -Yannie)

Thus Yannie revealed that her use of VCS and the types of VCS used depended on the difficulty of the test items. She remembered easy characters as a whole and divided difficult characters into parts. The more difficult a character was, the more parts she broke the character into.

Calvin reported a wider use of VCS than Yannie when recognising prompted characters. He reported using six types of VCS:

2-part chunking strategies: left and right (L-R)

top and bottom (T-B)
 top-right and bottom-left (TR-BL)
 top-left and bottom-right (TL-BR)
 outer and inner (O-I)

3-part chunking: left, middle and right (L-M-R)
 left, top-right and bottom-right (L-TR-BR)
 top-left, bottom-left and right (TL-BL-R)
 top, middle and bottom (T-M-B)
 top, bottom-outer and bottom-inner (T-BO-BI)
 outer, inner-left and inner-right (O-IL-IR)

Remembering a similar radical/character: similar radical (R)
 similar character (C)

Associating radicals/the character with meaning: radical (R)
 character (C)

Associating radicals with English letters
 Associating radicals with shapes

Table 5 shows the chunked characters in each test and the ways to chunk the characters.

Table 5. Calvin's reported use of VCS in ST1.

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
2-part chunking	江(L-R) 快(L-R) 鳳(O-I) 粹(L-R) 鈞(L-R) 式 (TR-BL) 盍(T-B)	兗 (T-B) 揩(L-R) 管(T-B) 浸(L-R) 屨 (TL-BR) 眨(L-R)	持 (L-R) 糲 (L-R)	春 (T-B)	折 (L-R) 撒 (L-R) 微 (L-R)	喙 (L-R) 腫 (L-R) 陡 (L-R)
3-part chunking	查 (T-M-B) 荀 (T-BO-BI) 傳 (L-TR-BR)	廊 (O-IL-IR)	-	貉 (L-TR-BR)	副 (TL-BL-R)	慚 (L-M-R)

Remembering a similar radical/character	-	-	-	貉(R) 春(C)	-	-
Associating radicals/the character with meaning	鳳 (C)	盲(R)	丐(R) 橙(C)	獎 (C) 畫(C)	茶(C) 冠(C)	喙(R) 腫(R) 慚(R)
Associating radicals with English letters	-	管(top: 2 'K's)	-	-	-	-
Associating radicals with shapes	-	-	-	-	鹵 (outer: bottle)	-
Total no. of chunked items	10	8	4	4	7	4

Calvin demonstrated the use of VCS before the instruction sessions, but even though he tried to use these strategies, he still made many errors when using VCS. His use of VCS decreased once the VCS instruction sessions started. He made use more VCS in T5, in which he found the test more challenging (as he had lower marks in T5) than the other tests. Calvin's explanation of why he did not divide some test items into parts supports why he used more VCS in harder tests:

R: ... for these ones (Item 2, 3 and 7), they can be divided into parts but you didn't. Can you tell me why?

C: Because these words are quite simple, and I've also seen these all 3 words before in the lesson. Well, so I remember them as a whole word.

(T6- Calvin)

This excerpt shows that Calvin only applied VCS on challenging items. For easy items, he managed to remember them stroke-by-stroke (what he meant by *as a whole*). He also explained that the reason behind the use of VCS was 'to make it easier for [him] to remember'.

Calvin made use of a range of VCS and in each type of VCS used, he showed several ways of using it. For 2-part chunking strategy, he reported using the TR-BL, TL-BR and OI chunking, in addition to the L-R and T-B chunking that Yannie reported using. Similarly, apart from the L-M-R and L-TR-BR that Yannie reported using, Calvin also reported using the TL-BL-R, T-M-B, T-BO-BI and O-IL-IR chunking. When he made use of meaning associations, he used it both for individual radicals and the entire character: this shows that even though Calvin sometimes did not divide a character into parts, he was still using VCS because he was trying to chunk a part/parts of a character and remember it/them by remembering its/their meaning.

Calvin reported using 2-part chunking and associating radicals/the character with meaning strategies in all 6 tests, and using 3-part chunking in 5 of the 6 tests. This shows that Calvin was very familiar with these types of strategies and that he could apply them to all or most of the tests. Other types of strategies (e.g. associating radicals with shapes or English letters) were only reported to be used once or twice. This was possibly due to the fact that not every character can be related to shapes or English

letters. Since these strategies were unexpected when the researcher designed the tests, the number of these characters (characters similar to letters or shapes) in each test was not controlled for. However, it is very interesting to find out in the stimulated recall that someone with English as their major language would use shapes and English letters when remembering Chinese characters.

Yannie reported using VCS in all tests except T3, while Calvin reported using VCS in all six tests. Both children said that they applied VCS to more challenging characters because they found that using VCS helped them remember difficult test items better. For easy characters, they tended to remember the characters as a whole without applying VCS. Thus, although they knew that some characters could be divided into chunks, they did not always use VCS in every test item. Their responses support the hypothesis that chunking strategies ease Chinese learners' working memory load and help learners manage characters with more complicated orthographic structures. They also reinforce earlier indications that visual chunking is a strategy rather than a skill, a term used by Pak et al (2005), and young learners of Chinese choose to use when they have problems decoding characters. These strategies 'aimed at improving [learners'] performance' (Schmitt, 2002:178) in two of the skill areas: reading and writing, but they are not skills themselves.

5 Conclusion

Although Calvin's and Yannie's performances in this case study cannot be generalised to the population, this study has provided insights into how some children make use of visual chunking as their strategies to decode Chinese characters, and how this may be related to their age and language background. It will be interesting to take the results of this study further to explore whether most children learning Chinese characters in Hong Kong use VCS only when they find a character challenging, how learners of Chinese use VCS in writing characteristics, and whether formal VCS instruction could be a better alternative than the traditional way of copying characters stroke by stroke.

Since VCS categorisations have not been developed in the literature, other researchers may also wish to make use of the error types coded and categorised from errors that the participants in this study had made. There may be other types of errors made by other learners of Chinese, but the six categories observed with the participants in this study can provide a basis of errors analysis regarding Chinese character learning.

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