

Research in Second Language Acquisition of Chinese: An Introduction

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Background: Challenges, Changes, and Needs

The last two decades has witnessed a surge of interest in learning Chinese as a second language (L2 Chinese) or foreign language. From 2004 to 2008, there was a 195% increase in enrollment in Chinese language courses in K-12 U.S. public schools (ACTFL, 2011). More recently, Chinese immersion programs have emerged in many independent school districts throughout the country. The number of students who took the AP Chinese and Culture Exam increased by 33.6% from 2012 to 2016 (College Board, 2016). Yet another index for the growing interest in L2 Chinese is international students' participation in study abroad programs in China, which has increased by 34.9% from 2012 to 2016 (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2017).

In addition to an overall increase in interest, the diversity of L2 Chinese learners' ethnic backgrounds expanded as well. More than two decades ago, Chinese language learners were mostly Caucasians. In contrast, a recent large-scale survey found that Caucasians now comprise only 51% of the student body (Li, Wen, & Xie, 2014). Chinese heritage students and those from Asian-American backgrounds make up more than 30%, and students from Latin American and African American backgrounds comprise a further 16%. One feature among heritage learners is their variety of linguistic backgrounds and experiences. Some are bilingual while others can only converse or understand simple daily conversation. Still others have cultural but no language exposure (He, 2008).

Along with these significant demographic changes in the population, learners' goals for studying Chinese have also been evolving. Traditional targets such as going to graduate school and becoming a sinologist have been replaced by functional and

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instrumental use of the language, as well as the desire for competence in Chinese culture and Chinese language (Comanaru & Noels, 2009; Sung, 2013; Xie, 2014; Wen, 1997, 2011).

In contrast to the rapid development of Chinese as a second language (CSL), research on CSL acquisition has acutely lagged behind. For example, in reviewing the current state of the literature on Chinese language motivation, Wen (in press) located only 16 empirical studies on the topic published up to 2016 after an exhaustive search. Moreover, only four Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA) monographs have been published since the CLTA was established more than five decades ago. Recent years have seen more development in L2 Chinese empirical research in books (Everson & Shen, 2011; Han, 2014, Tao 2016) and journals. Articles in these books and journals present more rigorous research methodology and a broader scope of inquiries. However, research in L2 Chinese, particularly empirical studies, is limited and clearly lags behind the research development of general second language acquisition (SLA).

This lack of research in CSL acquisition directly affects Chinese language teaching, which hampers CSL learning and under-serves our students. What determines the quality of classroom instruction is research-based knowledge of our learners and learning processes. Well informed instructors are able to opt for appropriate pedagogical approaches and instructional conditions for their students.

The changes in CSL learners' factors, and the burgeoning demand for understanding our students and their linguistic and cognitive needs call for more empirical studies on a wide range of topics to scrutinize the nature of Chinese language learning and factors that affect learning. This book, *Studies on Learning and Teaching Chinese as a Second Language*, CLTA Monograph V, represents the empirical research advances with ten empirical studies in the field of second language (L2) Chinese research.

Characteristics of the Volume

Theoretically Motivated with Diverse Research Objectives

All the studies in the volume are theoretically motivated, reflecting a wide range of research purposes in the current CSL research fields. The theories encompass cognitive processing for decoding and encoding Chinese at the character, word, sentence, and

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discourse levels, extending to meta-cognition and processing strategies (L. Li, Y. Li, Yao, Zhang, Zhao & Liu, Zhang & Koda in this volume, hereafter). In addition, the effects of input variations on L2 reading are investigated under the framework of Instructed Second Language Acquisition (ISLA). Studies also adopted the frameworks of the Transfer Facilitation (TF) Model (L. Li), “universal” phonological restriction theories (Zhang), and dependency locality theories (Yao) to respectively examine the effects of learners’ L1 transfer to L2 reading, universal constraints on tone changes, and relative clause processing. In the sociocultural domain, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and sociolinguistic theories guided studies on discourse analysis of learners’ functional abilities (Wang) and pragmatic competence (Wen). The theoretical underpinnings of classroom-based research embraced the motivation and goal theories (Shi et al.) to compare perspectives between teachers and their students, as well as the *Rasch* model to examine the quality of an instructor-developed course assessment (S. Li). Across the chapters, learners’ first languages may differ and their learning tasks may vary; various empirical data were collected and analyzed to test the aforementioned theories from linguistic and cognitive perspectives. The volume, empowered by the current theories and based on robust evidence, sheds light on our understanding of SLA in general and L2 Chinese acquisition in particular.

The volume presents theoretical frameworks and major findings on multiple core issues. One of the issues facing L2 Chinese researchers concerns the two different groups of learner populations: heritage language speakers and speakers whose L1s are those other than Chinese. The number of heritage language learners has increased steadily in recent years. What is lacking, however, is comparative research investigating these two groups of learners (Gass & Lewis, 2007; Han, 2014; Montrul, 2012). The first two chapters address this dearth by examining, the connections between Chinese heritage language (CHL) learners’ early language experiences and both their late literacy development, and pragmatic competence in varied social situations respectively. CHL learners are generally exposed to the Chinese language use in real life situations. The extent to which these social and linguistic contexts benefit them are the research objectives addressed by these two studies. Based on a usage-based theory of language acquisition (Tomasello, 2003), Zhang and Koda (Chapter 2) postulated that literacy

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development is largely experience-based and input-driven. Input in varied forms facilitates acquisition and helps learners internalize structural regularities for generative and constructive learning. Their study analyzed the relationship between the variations in early language experiences and later vocabulary knowledge. The results showed the positive and significant effects of early experiences on later word-knowledge development. Variations in early print experiences lead to differences in participants' word-level skills, including vocabulary knowledge and word meaning inference. Chapter 3 (Wen) presents a comparative study of CHL and CSL learners on their "request" performance. The study drew on politeness theories and L2 pragmatic theories (Kasper & Roever, 2005; Kasper & Rose, 2003) conceptualizing the pragmatic knowledge into two components: pragmalinguistic forms, i.e., the strategies concerning the mapping between linguistic form and pragmatic function, and sociopragmatic knowledge, which entails the constraints of socio-cultural factors on language use. Wen's study revealed that the CHL group outperformed its foreign language counterpart in terms of grammar and lexicon accuracy and in a few mitigating devices. In contrast, the foreign language group produced various forms of *head acts* (the request itself) that more closely approximated the production of Chinese native speakers (NSs). Both learner groups demonstrated a large discrepancy from the NS group in terms of underproduction of the modal verb *neng*, downtoners, understaters, and supportive moves, particularly in higher imposition situations; in lower imposition situations, learners also overproduced *query preparatories* and politeness expressions when compared with the NS group. Chapters 2 and 3 provide rich data on CHL learners' literacy development and their pragmatic competence.

Reading is one of the most frequently studied areas in L2 Chinese. This is not only because the Chinese writing system is distinctly different from most learners' L1 systems, but also because research on reading has theoretical and practical value. Reading is a largely learned ability and as such, research directly contributes to its teachability. Comprehension is the goal in the reading process. Research has shown that appropriately elaborated input with suitable redundancy helps learners with their comprehension (Gass 2013). One research objective shared by Y. Li (Chapter 4) and L. Li (Chapter 5) is to test the effects of textual elaboration on reading comprehension. Y. Li conceptualized reading comprehension into contextual strategies, testifying, and meaning reconstruction.

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The study revealed that contextual accessibility and the meaning similarities between learners' L1 and the target language facilitated and significantly affected the ease of comprehension. Semantic processing and pre-existing knowledge were strong predictors of accurate comprehension. In contrast to Chapter 4, which focuses on the word level (Chinese idioms), Chapter 5 (L. Li) focuses on the discourse level, investigating learners' coherence-building skills. L. Li's study drew upon the Construction-Integration (CI) Model of text comprehension (Kintsch, 1998) and the framework of the Transfer Facilitation (TF) Model (Koda, 2005), postulating that reading is a construction-integration process, particularly at the discourse level. The theoretical underpinning of L. Li's study also included the cross-linguistic transfer hypothesis (Bialystok, 2007) proposing that learners' knowledge and metalinguistic awareness are transferrable from their L1 into the L2 for the performance of cognitive and linguistic tasks. The findings demonstrate that both contextual reading strategies and an appropriate amount of textual elaboration to enhance learners' familiarity with linguistic features significantly increase reading comprehension.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 (Yao, Zhang, and Zhao & Liu respectively) investigate L2 Chinese distinctive features: the processing of subject- and object-extractive relative clauses (SRC, ORC), inter-tonal effects on tone production, and the word order of the Chinese locative respectively. Yao designed her study after reviewing six theories concerning syntactic parsing and relative clause processing. The study, with a wide spectrum of variables, each carefully controlled in the research design, found that both NSs' and L2 Chinese learners' default interpretations of the relevant construction was an SRC, although SRCs were read more slowly than ORCs by L2 learners. The findings lent support to the linear distance theory, the dependency locality theory, and the canonical word order theory. Zhang's study on inter-tonal pronunciation effects conceptualized tone co-articulation into the cross-linguistic mechanism of anticipatory co-articulation, pitch in languages, and anticipatory dissimilation. The study revealed that in addition to L1 interference and prosodic structures effects, anticipatory co-articulation and certain "universal" articulatory constraints played significant roles in L2 Chinese tone production. Zhao and Liu (Chapter 8) tested the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace, 2011) by examining L2 Chinese acquisition of the locative ZaiP. The results showed that L2 learners

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performed more accurately on preverbal ZaiP than postverbal ZaiP, which suggested that the syntactic and semantic interface constraints played a role in the process. However, evident development was neither found in haplology of *zai* nor in the use of the perfective *le* in relation to ZaiP. The authors concluded that the Interface Hypothesis was partially supported. These three studies, conducted under different theoretical frameworks and in diverse linguistic domains, share a number of consistent findings lending support to linguistic and cognitive constraint theories as well as L1 interference on L2 comprehension and production.

Chapters 9, 10, and 11 focus on classroom-based investigation. Language is functional and thus learning a L2 is then learning how to use language in specific social situations. Wang (Chapter 9) explored the types of discourse performed by intermediate L2 Chinese learners on Facebook. The study, adopting the functional perspective of language (Halliday, 1993), discovered 22 types of frequently used discourse functions in social communication. Shi, Lin, and Wei (Chapter 10) presents a research transition from learners' data in this volume to both learners' and instructors' data. The study examined the extent to which course goals created by teachers align with students' goals. Guided by goal and motivation theories, the study found that the course goal alignments between the teacher and students not only influenced students' perceptions of and interactions with their teachers, but also impacted student motivation and teacher-student interactions outside of class. Furthermore, teacher instrumentality mediates course goal alignment and learning motivations. The last chapter (S. Li) probed the measurement quality of an instructor-developed assessment instrument. The study utilized item response theory (IRT), the *Rasch* Model, to construct an interval scale of measurement to identify potentially problematic items in contexts. The results addressed several fundamental issues of assessments: the measurement quality of reliability, item difficulty level, test/item discrimination, and *Rasch* Model fit.

In summary, the studies collected in this volume are theoretically driven. They explore L2 Chinese learning in a wide array of domains: heritage learners' literacy and pragmatic developments, reading comprehension in a spectrum ranging from word to discourse levels, syntactic processing, articulatory inter-tonal effects in tone phonology, syntax-semantics interface, extending to discourse functions, the relationship between

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instructional goals and learning motivation, and instructional measurement quality of an instrument. All the studies have addressed the current issues confronting both SLA and CSL scholars. The findings reveal universal psycholinguistic processes as well as linguistic and cognitive constraints on CSL acquisition. Such findings, from the L2 Chinese language-specific perspective, complement our understanding of general SLA.

Research Design and Methodology

Research design and methodologies in this book are multifaceted, originating from a variety of research agendas to fulfill the goals of investigation. The volume presents quantitative (Zhang & Koda, L. Li, Yao, Zhang, Zhao & Liu, Shi et al, S. Li), qualitative (Wang), and mixed methods (Y. Li, Wen) paradigms. The strength of the quantitative approach, as Ushioda and Dörnyei (2012, p. 401) commented, includes rigor and systematicity in data-gathering and analysis, as well as comparability and replicability of data to generalize to wider populations. In this volume, studies that adopted the quantitative approach frequently used cross-sectional designs and multiple measures to detect the effects of learner background (Zhang & Koda, Wen, L. Li, Yao, Zhang, Zhao & Liu, Shi et al.), input or language exposure variations (Zhang & Koda, Wen, Y. Li, L. Li, Yao, Zhang), and L1 interference (Y. Li, L. Li, Yao, Zhang).

The quantitative approach, with large samples, provides research efficiency and a wide perspective. The weakness of the paradigm, however, includes that it examines variables in a comparatively static fashion, and analyzes the relationship among variables in relative isolation (Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2012). As an alternative, the qualitative paradigm, or a mixed-methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative perspectives, has gained attention. These approaches, especially mixed-methods, are holistic and dynamic, focusing on the temporal and contextual complexity of learning processes and interactions among variables. Wen and Y. Li (Chapters 3 and 4) adopted the mixed-methods approach. Wen conducted discourse and pragmatic analysis on “request” performance and Y. Li used thinking aloud protocols on learners’ contextual strategies in reading comprehension in addition to parametric statistical analyses. Wang (Chapter 9) adopted a qualitative approach and used a computer-mediated discourse analysis to draw insights on communicative competence through online interactions among classmates from an L2 Chinese language course.

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Language knowledge and learning process are difficult to measure due to their complexity and abstract nature. In addition to the methodological approaches discussed above, data collection instruments in this volume demonstrated a wide spectrum of research novelty. Varied input and instructional conditions, online interactions, and manipulated materials, among other examples, were utilized for data collection. The volume has expanded traditional methods by integrating measures for in-depth analyses of learners' linguistic preferences, input processing, social interactions, and acts of communication.

Chapter 2 (Zhang & Koda), as an example, examined the relationship of diversities of early language experiences to word-knowledge development among collegiate CHL learners. The study developed five rigorous measures in oral and print knowledge, morphological awareness, and inference abilities, in addition to a language background survey. The study was then able to group the participants into two clusters for comparisons based on their prior print experiences in order to address further in-depth research questions. In a similar fashion, other authors innovatively varied research instruments in linguistic and/or cognitive domains to scrutinize the nature of learning and the learning processes. While investigating a wide array of topics, the authors created research instruments with multiple socio-cultural scenarios (Wen, Wang), diverse and manipulated reading and reading contexts (Y. Li, L. Li), and varied linguistic input and production tasks (Zhang & Koda, Y. Li, L. Li, Yao, Zhang, and Zhao & Liu), extending to teacher-student interactions (Shi et al.) and a teacher-developed assessment (S. Li). All the instruments were statistically tested for levels of reliability. In addition, research context varied, ranging from classroom-based and lab-based settings to social media and study abroad contexts.

Connecting L2 Chinese Research to Teaching

Research on SLA concerns how second languages are learned. It is the study of L2 learning processes, mechanisms, and outcomes; the study of what is learned and what is not learned (Gass, 2013). Before making any assumptions on effective L2 teaching, we need to know about our students and how they acquire linguistic knowledge and use language in sociocultural contexts. This book, with a wide range of L2 Chinese issues investigated, and with empirical evidence accounted for by theories, aims to harness

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research findings for effective instruction.

The book encompasses a wide range of Chinese language specific features, cognitive and sociocultural processes, and their intersection in L2 Chinese instruction. The linguistic features include different types of colloquial idioms (Chapter 4), connectives (Chapter 5), relative clauses (Chapter 6), syntactic-semantic interface (Chapter 8), and tone changes in specific linguistic environments (Chapter 7). Language use reflects sociolinguistic competence, e.g., learners' abilities in communicating to other interlocutors in varied social situations (Chapter 3) and on social media (Chapter 9). The book analyzes these features to make inferences about learners' linguistic knowledge, cognition, and pragmatic competence. It offers empirical information to instructors.

The investigations of linguistic and cognitive intersections concern the relationship between learners' diverse language experiences and their L2 Chinese development. This includes, for example, how different L1 experiences impact L2 Chinese input processing, and the utilization of context strategies under certain cognitive and linguistic conditions (Chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). The comparative studies both within CHL groups (Chapter 2) and across heritage and non-heritage groups (Chapter 3) shed light on L2 Chinese learners' similarities and differences in terms of literacy development and use of pragmatic functions. The study on students' perspectives of teacher-specified course goals furthers our understanding not only of the relationship between instructors and students, but also of students' motivations at varied proficiency levels (Chapter 10). By scrutinizing the linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural aspects of learning, the book illustrates how learners' backgrounds influence the acquisition of various L2 Chinese linguistic features under different instructional conditions.

The book ends with research on teaching: the measurement quality of a curriculum-based achievement test (Chapter 11). L2 Chinese language teachers develop classroom-based assessments daily. The quality of these assessments, a factor that is crucial to the curriculum, is a constant concern of teachers, yet it is rarely researched (Ke, 2012). S. Li's study on the reliability and validity of an instructor-developed course test demonstrates methods and considerations in evaluating instructional assessment quality, as well as strategies for improving the quality.

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This volume, with a section on applications to or implications for instruction in each chapter, and a wide range of language features addressed, provokes our thoughts and practices on research-based instruction. Teachers can gain pedagogical insights from consistent empirical facts derived from the volume and supported by theoretical accounts. For example, the findings of Chapters 2, 4, and 5 illuminate the reading comprehension process and literacy development of CSL and CHL learners. The studies provide empirical data on the issues of L2 Chinese readability, including the size of new vocabulary, elaboration, and syntactic cues in the text, and the rate of reading comprehension. Such research has direct implications to pedagogy; particularly, what kinds of input modifications should be provided in terms of linguistic cues and contextual redundancies in relation to learners' proficiency levels. As Ke (2012, p. 58) points out, "texts for intermediate level learners should be modified in accordance with empirical data obtained from student readers rather than based on the text-book compilers' arbitrary beliefs on places where students are likely to encounter problems."

Future Research Direction

This book covers a wide range of topics on learners, learning processes, and multiple Chinese linguistic features. The volume examines diverse CSL learners, whose first languages are not only English, but also others that are typologically different from English, such as Japanese and Korean. By incorporating an array of variables and operationalizing them, the studies measure the effects of cross-linguistic similarities, processing and production strategies, and linguistic constraints. The book reveals insights on learning processes involved in acquiring various L2 Chinese linguistic features. It also provokes additional research questions awaiting future studies. The implications in this book for future directions reinforce several dimensions. I will, however, focus on three aspects: (1) The need for more empirical research to validate the current L2 Chinese research and expand the scope, (2) The need for innovative research design with a rigorous methodology, and (3) The need for classroom-based research.

Expand the Scope and Validate the Current L2 Chinese Research

Further research is warranted to validate the current findings. This is because replication studies in L2 Chinese research are scarce, but they are essential to corroborate

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confounding data, and to address a mix of findings across studies. Since research is conducted under varied theoretical approaches, methodologies as well as different contexts, empirical findings may yield inconsistency. Research with similar designs but targeting a variety of linguistic or cognitive agendas, as well as with the same linguistic and cognitive topics but conducted from different perspectives and methodology, is needed to build up a body of knowledge that broadens and validates our understanding of CSL acquisition. With research scope further expanded and different types of data verified, empirical findings should ultimately achieve a level of consistency.

When proposing empirical endeavors, we cannot over-emphasize the guidance of SLA theories in L2 Chinese research and account for empirical evidence. These theories, exemplified in VanPatten & Williams (2015), include University Grammar, the concept-oriented approach, input processing, the declarative/procedural model, the interactionist approach, and sociocultural theory. These theories need to be further empirically tested by different L2 languages, including L2 Chinese. In turn, L2 Chinese research contributes to the development of the SLA theories if the researchers connect their investigations to the larger arena of SLA. With the theoretical and empirical endeavors, we are able to speed up L2 Chinese research and consolidate development in the field.

One area of research that needs to be expanded is that of CHL learners, whose number have rapidly increased in the past decades. As demonstrated in Chapter 2 of this volume, heritage learners' homes or local communities provide unique exposure to language use in varying degree. However, it is not clear whether heritage learners are able to maintain their linguistic competence once they start formal schooling (He and Xiao 2008; Montrul 2010). It is also questionable whether or not they are able to transfer what they have developed at home to more formal, academic contexts (Kagan, 2012). In addition, heritage learners come to Chinese language courses with diverse language proficiency levels, ranging from bilinguals to learners with limited ability other than listening (He 2008; Wen 2011). Findings in Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrate that bilingual competence gives heritage learners a certain advantage with their literacy and pragmatic competence, and at the same time they display a great degree of variation within the group and similarities to the non-heritage learner group.

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CHL learners' background factors, such as their early and current home/community language contact, their development in different language modalities, and the amount of language and cultural exposure, are intertwined and ought to be subjected to more research. The availability of a Chinese-speaking community and variations in the amount of media input (e.g., films, TV programs, and songs in the target language) also need to be scrutinized when we investigate language use in context. Equally important is the development of valid measurements to reliably place CHL learners into a language course at an appropriate proficiency level. Chapter 11, an exploratory pilot study, demonstrates such an endeavor. Future studies, focusing on effectively discriminating learners with different language backgrounds and from varied contexts, will prove very useful to instructional institutions. Since assessment requires a large data corpus to construct the instrument, there is an increasing need for research collaboration. Finally, comparative studies are needed to analyze the aspects of learning where CHL and CSL learners differ and, importantly, what accounts for the differences.

Rigorous Research Design and Methodology

Research design and data collection are vital for SLA research, largely due to the interdisciplinary nature of the field, intersecting with linguistics, psychology, and sociocultural studies. Robust research methodology and careful design promise more reliable results. Drawing on the psychology framework, this volume may be biased towards the quantitative paradigm, as is true of the majority of research published in journals and books on psycholinguistics. We need to expand traditional methods by integrating a variety of measures. The mixed-methods approach, with both quantitative and qualitative data analyses, is rigorous in terms of data validation. Quantitative methods offer an efficient tool that deconceptualizes variables and collects a large amount of data (e.g., via a questionnaire) to allow researchers to gain a wider perspective and make generalizations. Qualitative methods provide detailed examinations in context that capture learners' changes in the process. A mixed-methods design, thus, provides a way for a researcher to examine different types of data in order to increase the overall research reliability and validity.

One design that deserves attention is the longitudinal method, spanning at least one year. It is a comprehensive tool that keeps track of learners' developments and examines

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the interactions between learners and their environments. There is a dearth of longitudinal studies in L2 Chinese research; however, none of the studies in this volume adopted the longitudinal design. Instead, most studies employed cross-sectional design, with a native-speaker group providing the baseline data for comparison. When research is focused on a group of learners' language development, a longitudinal design, by incorporating multiple factors into the analysis, serves the purpose. In this 'learner focused' design, learners are the 'agency' who initiates interactions, which can either positively or negatively influence learning (Ortega & Ibarra-Shea, 2005; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012).

Data elicitation methods have been a primary concern in SLA research. Studies in this volume have illustrated how Chinese-specific features can be identified, elicited, and analyzed to infer learners' linguistic competence. Recent years have seen advanced methods of data collection, notably utilizing digital media to capture the accuracy and fluency of learners' performance, and corpus-based analysis. Studies should continue to explore innovative data collection and analysis methods that reveal language use "from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication." (Crystal, 1997, p. 30)

Synergy between Research and Teaching

In terms of the relation between research and instruction, implications derived from this volume include that research agendas should be in line with different instructional conditions, linguistic features, and assessment measures. The questions of what and why different instructional approaches are differentially effective in producing learning outcomes call for more research attention. Since different instructional input and conditions are differentially effective for learning as shown in this volume, teachers, with this understanding, will be able to create effective instructional conditions to accommodate learners' needs. Knowledge generated from research will lead to insights in what types of pedagogical input and conditions should be arranged in the learning context. Findings from this volume, together with other studies, will establish a research basis on which high-quality L2 instruction can be developed.

Classroom-based research, focusing on ISLA and adopting diverse research methods from theoretical perspectives, provides an efficient venue to investigate learning

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conditions and environments in addition to interactions with language forms.

Furthermore, as proposed by scholars (Cui, 2010; Han, 2016; Van den Branden, 2016), professionally trained teachers should not only be informed by current theories and research, but should also be ‘empirically minded’ (Han, 2016). Teachers can engage in classroom-based research using their classroom as a laboratory to test hypotheses and find out, with their own first-hand data, which instructional conditions and input seem to work and which does not with their students. Given an increasing interest in classroom-based research in SLA and with reliable methods derived from current robust L2 Chinese research such as from this volume, conducting this kind of Chinese classroom SLA research become more realistic.

Targeted Readers and Acknowledgements

Researchers and graduate students in L2 acquisition may find this book interesting and useful. The issues addressed are broad and in-depth, which is generally informative to SLA and specifically to CSL acquisition researchers. The book is also intended for L2 Chinese practitioners. The book provides a wide range of insights, including learning processes and mechanisms as well as the patterns of acquisition for multiple Chinese linguistic features, which are helpful to teachers. As our understanding of how students acquire the language and what accounts for the acquisition develops, we are able to apply the knowledge to instruction in striving for teaching effectiveness.

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